new masses

YOU MAY BE NEXT!

Every honest American is in danger

WHAT THE UN-AMERICAN COMMITTEE IS PLOTTING

A CALL TO ACTION

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MATERIALISM AND JOHN DEWEY A DISCUSSION

by CORLISS LAMONT and HOWARD SELSAM

FEBRUARY 25, 1947

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You almost had no NEW MASSES *this week.* At press time the printer balked. He demanded $2,700 in part payment of our back debt. We didn't have it because our fund drive is grievously slow in getting under way. After an hour's argument, he gave us four days' extension. We covered his demand—half by a loan, and half by your contributions.

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THINK HARD
THINK FAST

You may be next!

A CALL TO ACTION

IN THE Un-American Committee's persecution of Gerhart Eisler do we have a forewarning of dire things to come?

Eisler is not an American, but neither was Dimitrov. Too many Americans thought that Dimitrov and the Reichstag Fire were remote from their lives. And many of them paid with their lives to learn that it was not.

Perhaps even now there are Americans who think that the terror directed against Eisler cannot touch them. Let them think again. Let them tie together the loose strands and see the rope being prepared for their necks. Let them tie the anti-labor proposals to the anti-Semitic, anti-Negro hatred of the Columbians in Georgia; let them tie the Red-baiters' repressions to the warmongers' diatribes against the new Europe; let them tie the hysteria of yesterday's Palmer and Lusk raids to today's deliberately fomented spy scare; let them tie the oncoming economic debacle to the NAM's clamor for the silencing of those demanding changes to forestall the crisis' worst shocks.

Now it is Eisler, but tomorrow will it perhaps be Smith and Brown and Jones—anyone whose Americanism does not meet the definition set by the Un-American Committee?

The committee is the advance guard of a new era of terror. All its filthy work of the past will seem like nursery play compared to what has been projected for it by the power-mad monopolies. Born in the backwash of the last great depression, the committee was set up by big business to stifle a restless America, to end the sit-down strikes, to curb the awakening labor giant. Again it is brought forth for a repeat performance. The techniques are the same, with anti-communism the screen behind which fascism bids for supremacy.

Those who use the committee use it because they know that the great issues of the postwar world are being resolved in a way distasteful to them. They see that the military defeat of fascism has brought in its wake enormous mass movements in Europe and Asia, popular democracies where once the foreign counterparts of Dies, Wood and Rankin had free reign. They fear for themselves when they see the old ruling classes rapidly losing face, with the worst of these rulers condemned as collaborators of Hitler.

This upsurge penetrates America, and the Un-American Committee is assigned the job of stopping it by setting up an iron curtain. It is to torture the American mind with unfounded fears, divide neighbor from neighbor. This is their dry war within, preliminary to a war abroad.

The committee again resorts to its old trick of political lynching through kangaroo procedures. It has a blacklist of a million names. That the Un-American Committee has chosen Gerhart Eisler as its first big target does not mean that he is the only target. In the past the targets have included Henry Wallace, Eleanor Roosevelt, Harold Ickes, CIO and AFL officials, Marshall Field, Archibald MacLeish, Mary McLeod Bethune, Sidney Hillman, Harlow Shapley. Tomorrow there will be others who have fundamental differences with Eisler, the Communist, but who will be subjected to the same treatment as though their names were Eisler.

No one can be safe from a committee that flouts the Constitution, denies witnesses the right of examination by

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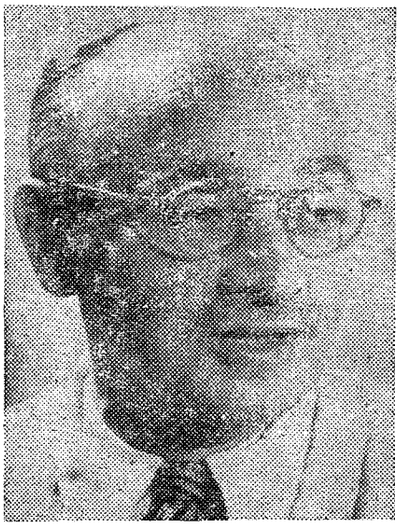
their own counsel. No one can be safe from a committee that accepts as evidence hearsay, rumor, the word of convicted criminals. The Un-American Committee has time and again accepted as gospel truth material which would have been tossed out by an honest court. It has gone in for character assassination and deprived men and women of their livelihood because in the committee's opinion they held ideas "imported from abroad." With that as a criterion of who is an American, every doctor who accepts the discoveries of a colleague abroad, every musician who plays the work of a foreign composer, everyone who accepts the ideas of Adam Smith and Lord Keynes —or speaks the English language—is suspect and subversive.



GERHART EISLER

Nor should we forget that the committee has left almost untouched the real subversives, the fascists and their friends. It has not badgered or brought to light dozens of individuals and organizations who live by *Mein Kampf*. Hardly strange is the fact that the committee has not to this day investigated the Columbians of Georgia or its fascist leader, Homer Loomis Jr., whom a private organization has exposed as the source of a reign of terror in Atlanta. Yet Eisler, who has fought the Loomis prototypes in Germany, France and Spain—fought fascism for thirty years—is made a *cause celebre* to delight every scoundrel, stoolpigeon and turncoat fearful of the meaning of anti-fascism.

The committee is and has been a front organization for the whole kit and caboodle of American reaction. It has attacked as foreign everything foreign to its own beliefs. It has dragged the Bill of Rights through the fascist muck and has operated without fear of legal reprisal. It has been applauded by Coughlin, by George Sylvester Viereck, Fritz Kuhn, Gerald L. K. Smith. In the *Fiery Cross* (Jan. 27, 1942) it was praised by the imperial wizard of the Ku Klux Klan as having "rendered a great service to our country." It has shielded Axis agents and more than once did the Axis radio broadcast committee charges against government war agencies before Americans could read about them in their own newspapers.

The committee has employed known anti-Semites and anti-Catholics as investigators. At one time its chief detective was one Edward F. Sullivan, who used witnesses with known criminal records and who himself made speeches attacking Jews and Catholics. Others exposed Sullivan to the committee, but even then the committee did nothing to investigate the un-Americanism of its chief investigator.

The committee's members, as Gerhart Eisler describes them, "dream about the 'century of the investigated man.' For everyone an investigator in the garage and a subpoena in the pot!" And it was Eisler, out of his long experience as a fighting anti-fascist, who reminded Americans "that the Nazi dictatorship was the most developed Committee Against so-called 'Un-German Activities.' It persecuted millions of decent Germans and people of all lands who were not ready to think and to act according to the Nazi standard of what is 'Un-German.' Can't you hear in this country loud voices that would like to punish every people in the world which does not live up to the standards of the ideas of your Un-American Activities Committee?"

It is good to have a Gerhart Eisler identify these voices and tell us the meaning of their words. But it is not Communists alone who recognize danger signals when they see them. Non-Communists, men who have never seen eye to eye with Marxists, have spoken up against the committee. Henry Wallace has said of Dies that had he been on Hitler's payroll he could not have aided the Axis cause more effectively. And from the other end of the political pole, Walter Lippmann has described the committee as unlawful, its procedure "a violation of American morality." "It is a pillory," he wrote in one of his columns, "in which reputations are ruined, often without proof and always without the legal safeguards that protect the ordinary criminal; it is a tribunal before which men are arraigned and charged with acts that are, as a matter of fact, lawful." During the episcopacy of Cardinal Mundelein the official organ of the Chicago diocese, *The New World*, said of the committee: "If it is really a committee to investigate 'un-American activities,' it should begin with an investigation of itself."

The picture of an official committee undermining America by attempting to destroy its most democratic elements is grim enough but it becomes even more grim when its work is officially endorsed by the Republican speaker of the House, Joe Martin. We cannot blink the fact that the committee's policies are not merely the policies of a handful of brazen wild men but of the party holding power in Congress. During the Roosevelt administration, the committee was a malignant growth but it could be kept within controllable bounds by the fact that it did not have the administration's sanction. After the Republican victory the controls no longer exist and with the GOP behind it it becomes more powerful than it has ever been.

The Republicans with tory Democrat support are using the committee to prepare an enormous Red-scare preliminary to an anti-labor drive which will not end with the passage of anti-labor legislation. If we let them they will pattern our fate in exactly the same way that Hitler patterned the fate of Germany. Everything with a modicum of dissidence will be labeled Red; anything that evokes and brings into play our democratic and revolutionary heritage will be classified as foreign and alien. There is to be an intellectual tariff wall not only between this country and others but between one state of the union and another, one community and another. Democratic institutions and organizations born out of struggle will be declared illegal on the ground that their existence is a menace to security. The word spy is to be pinned on anyone with a "dangerous thought." "Overthrow of the government" is to be used against any group or individual challenging the fascist pattern.

And all this is for the purpose of

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stamping out the growing disillusionment and restlessness over the broken promises made by the holders of monopoly power. They are in deadly fear of the strong counter-movement against them. They listen with dismay to the talk of a third party. They dread the prospect of a split atom threatening their enormous capital investments. They are horrified by the knowledge that millions are turning to Marxism, and others, if not to Marxism, certainly not to them. They fear a world stabilizing itself without American imperialist direction. They are in mortal terror that their myth of superiority is quickly exposing itself. They fear the day and they seek to bring the night.

IT IS in this context that the Un-American Committee is pursuing and persecuting Gerhart Eisler.

He has told its members that he looks upon them "with contempt." His conduct before them was a model of fearlessness—a fearlessness learned in the German underground fighting Hitler, in open warfare with Franco, in battle with his keepers in the concentration camps.

If Hitler could not destroy this man what makes Rankin or Thomas think they can?

But try they will—by framing him. They have already hurled at him verbal barrages reminiscent of Goering's courtroom encounters with Dimitrov. The FBI has already brought forth its private files, and the committee its assorted stoolpigeons with their bought and paid-for "testimony." There is among them William Nowell, a Ford labor spy and accomplice of Gerald L. K. Smith; there is Louis Budenz, a Judas whom the Vatican hierarchy has trained in its own special brand of betrayal; Ruth Fischer, the Trotzkyite who has appropriately sold her political opinions to Hearst and would like others to forget that she once befriended Jacques Doriot, the French traitor-fascist.

And what crimes did Eisler commit? It was not he who fought the OPA. It was not he who wrote articles expressing admiration for Hitler's air force. It was not he who sold scrap iron to the Japanese. It was not he who made deals with I. G. Farben and interfered with American war production. It was not he who started a race riot in Detroit or desecrated the scrolls in a Bronx synagogue. It was not he who raised $100,000,000 in the stockmarket to destroy the Auto Workers' Union. It was not he who lynched a Negro in Mississippi. It was not he who slandered Roosevelt or whispered that Roosevelt was responsible for the war.

No, he did not do these things, and

"I CANNOT BE SILENT..."

The following message was sent to Rep. J. Parnell Thomas, chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Affairs, by Albert E. Kahn, president of the Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order and co-author of the best-selling books, "Sabotage," "The Plot Against the Peace" and "The Great Conspiracy."

AS AN American and a Jew I feel a profound debt to Gerhart Eisler for his heroic, self-sacrificing struggle against fascism, and I cannot witness in silence your indescribably shameful persecution of this outstanding German anti-fascist.

The real character of your "case" against Gerhart Eisler is clearly enough revealed by the fact that one of your star witnesses is a man by the name of William Nowell. I personally have acquired evidence that William Nowell is a former confidential advisor to the notorious fascist leader, Gerald L. K. Smith. I also have proof that Nowell is a one-time labor spy.

For some years, as a journalist and author, I have been investigating and writing about fascist activities in the United States. In this work I have repeatedly observed how your Un-American Committee carefully avoided prosecuting American fascists while sedulously persecuting American anti-fascists. In 1939 I called your attention to the case of the Russian fascist emigre, Anastase Vonsiatsky. He was then operating in this country as an agent of the German and Japanese Intelligence Services. He was disseminating Nazi propaganda and was drilling an armed band of storm-troopers on his Connecticut estate, which was used as a rendezvous for Axis spies. I submitted to your committee, among other documentary material, evidence that Vonsiatsky had participated in a number of torture-murders before coming to this country. But Vonsiatsky was not Eisler. Vonsiatsky was a fascist, not an anti-fascist. So your committee took no action whatsoever against Vonsiatsky.

From its inception under Martin Dies, your committee summoned to testify about the alleged subversive activities of leading American progressives, so-called "expert witnesses" who were actually ex-convicts, professional labor spies, foreign agents and racketeers. The first chief investigator of the Dies committee was an anti-Semitic propagandist with a police record. It is fitting that your "case" against Gerhart Eisler should be based not only on the testimony of Gerald L. K. Smith's former aide, William Nowell, but also on the hysterical accusations of Louis Budenz, a renegade radical turned informer, and Ruth Fischer, an international adventuress, who at one time was associated with the French fascist, Jacques Doriot.

Because the members of your committee supposedly act as representatives of the American people, your conduct and that of the FBI in this "case" will reflect upon the reputation of our entire nation. Anti-fascists of every land will hold our government responsible for this outrageous persecution of a man who has so notably distinguished himself in the fight against fascism. You are not only committing a shocking injustice against Gerhart Eisler. You are wronging the American people as a whole.

ALBERT E. KAHN.

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he has therefore found himself unworthy of the respect of the committee or of Luce and Hearst and Roy Howard and Col. McCormick. "If I would have come out," Eisler has said, "for a negotiated peace with Hitler Germany as Dorothy Thompson did, and would have shed tears over the hanging of the war criminals as Senator Taft did, I guess I would have been treated quite differently."

Typical of Gestapo methods was the way he was arrested in his home. There was no warrant served him. Someone had heard that he was about to flee the country rather than face the Un-American Committee. But strange it is that a man about to "run away" buys a round-trip ticket to Washington a day or so in advance of the "hearing," reserves a room at the Hotel Willard, and writes a twenty-page statement to be read by him before the committee. He carefully prepares his defense with his lawyer and makes speeches at large meetings in New York and Chicago in behalf of his rights. This is not the conduct of a man about to take flight. It is that of a man who has faced bigger brow-beaters than the pigmies who preside over the committee.

But Edgar Hoover of the FBI said that Eisler has committed crimes: that he was "*suspected*" of involvement in espionage, that there is a "*very definite possibility*" that he "*may be*" involved in intelligence work, that he "*may have been*" regularly employed by the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, and that "*it appears*" that Eisler has been careful about visiting the Communist Party.

There is not in the whole of Hoover's FBI report to the committee a definitely established crime or a piece of irrefutable evidence. Everything is conjectural, a crude logic based on even cruder guesswork. Yet our distinguished flatfoot, eager to share the screaming headlines with the committee, is ready to use his assistants' guesses to smear a man and damage him in the public eye with charges which could only hold in a kangaroo court run by vigilantes.

Such is the testimony Americans are asked to accept about a man who came to this country involuntarily, was forced to stay here against his wishes. He is charged with perjury for not declaring that he was a Communist when he entered the country. How many Americans can tell their bosses they are Communists? How many Christians could tell Emperor Nero they were Christians? For Eisler to have declared that he was a Communist would have meant his being sent back to certain death in occupied France or Germany. Of course, had he been a monarcho-fascist like Kurt Schuschnigg, recently admitted to this country and lionized by our best people for shooting Austrian workers, there would be no complaints from the powers that be.

Eisler is also charged with income tax evasion—a standard legal device when there are no other grounds for prosecution. In the six years that he lived here there was never an investigation of the tax business, not a chirp from Washington about it. In fact when he was given an exit permit last July to return to Germany—a permit cleared by the State and Justice Departments—it tacitly implied that his tax obligations were also cleared for no alien leaving the country can do so without such prior clearance.

Eisler is charged with being an agent of the Communist International and the secret chief of the American Communists. Proof? Not a shred of it, not an iota of evidence. Again *maybe, perhaps, it is not too clear.* He has not denied that when the Communist International was in existence it had his sympathy. Nor were its policies secret so that it had to have secret agents. Its documents were published in dozens of languages. They can be read by anyone in the New York Public Library, in university libraries, in the Herbert Hoover Library on the West Coast. The big lie always walks hand in hand with the big secret.

Did the Un-American Committee ever investigate American bankers who throughout the war met secretly with Germans in Basle, Switzerland? There the German bankers and their American colleagues jointly steered the Bank of International Settlements and there "some highly suspicious arrangements seem to have been made, such as certain negotiations connected with the invasion of North Africa." The Bank also "provided a meeting ground for German and Allied industrial and banking representatives to lay plans for cartels and other agreements for the postwar period." (From Waverly Root's *Secret History of the War*, Vol. III.)

Where was the Un-American Committee when the banker, Thomas H. McKittrick, was getting in and out of Nazi-surrounded Switzerland with great ease for a citizen of the United States?

If Eisler were a banker with ties to international cartels he would have no trouble today.

The fact still remains that the State Department and the FBI knew who Eisler was and cleared him for an exit permit. In July, 1946, when Eisler received the permit, he was not an agent of a non-existent Communist International or the secret head of the American Communist Party. In December, five months later, he is suddenly painted as such. No doubt it took five months to cook up this conspiracy, to contrive "evidence" and invent lies.

THE time has come to end the myth of Communist conspiracy. It is time that some liberals stopped helping the Un-American Committee and J. Edgar Hoover with the nonsense that communism is a sinister plot or that the Communist International still operates secretly. "It would be better for all concerned," writes I. F. Stone in *PM*, "if the Communists came fully into the open, ended all the penny-dreadful hole-in-the-wall playing-at-revolution." Here willy-nilly is a liberal's perpetuation of fascist claptrap. The Communist Party is a legal party with its legality confirmed by the United States Supreme Court. Its policies are spread over the pages of each day's issue of the *Daily Worker*. And when there are Communists who cannot openly state their political convictions, Mr. Stone should ask himself why they cannot. It means a loss of their livelihood. It does not mean that this is Communist policy. The cross-examination which Stone gave an official of the War Department should prove to him how hard it is even to work as an open trade unionist without being summarily dismissed from War Department jobs. It is a mark of a restricted democracy and of a growing repression when a man cannot state his Communist opinions without fear of reprisal, or help his union without fear of losing his job. It is not a mark of conspiracy.

A quick glance over the Un-American Committee's reports shows that for every Communist subjected to the witch hunt there are a dozen liberals who have received the same treatment. The committee has said of them

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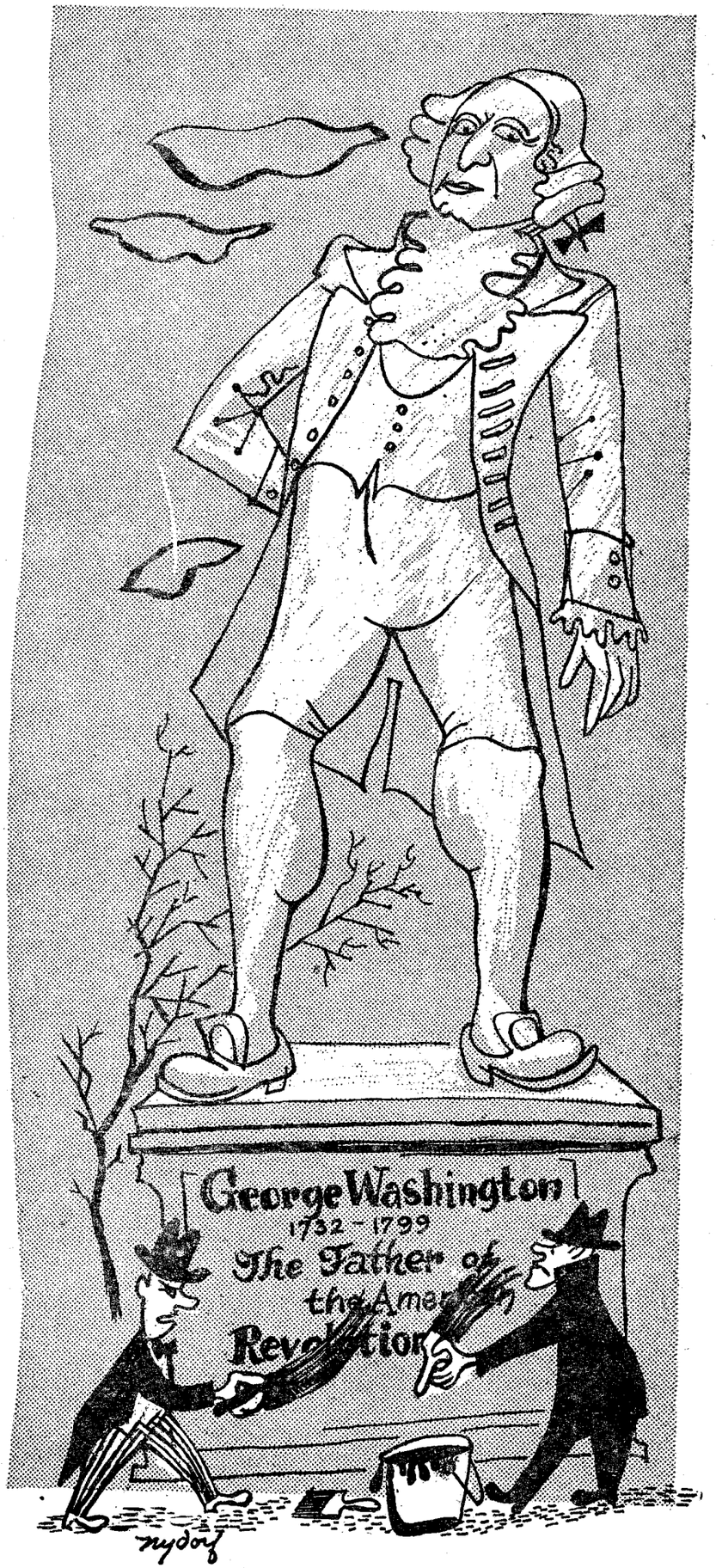
that they too were not working fully in the open. It has levelled the same charges against Mr. Stone's friends as Mr. Stone levels against the Communists. No one curries any special favor from Wood or Rankin or Thomas by putting their rubbish into more genteel, more liberal language. Even David Lilienthal's appeasement of his inquisitors does not satisfy them.

It is either we or they, Mr. Stone. That is the heart of the matter. The German liberals paid the heaviest price for diluting the battle against Hitler with the mania of Communist conspiracy. Before one expresses opinions about Communists he ought to know why they have become the leading party of France. He ought to know why there is a Communist premier in Czechoslovakia. He ought to know why the Communist Party of Italy has well over a million members. He ought to know why J. B. S. Haldane is a Communist, why Langevin was one until the day he died, why Picasso became one and why Louis Aragon has done his best creative work as a Communist. He ought to know what makes Mao Tse-tung and Bill Foster tick. Conspiracy? No. Courage and clear-headedness, and a sense of historical need? Yes.

We will hit back. We will strike blow for blow. And we will not be alone. This is 1947, not 1933. This is the era of the worldwide advance of genuine people's democracy. Fascism has cost the world too much to let the tinhorn fuehrers of the Un-American Committee tell Americans how they shall live and what they shall think. All of us, the liberal and the Communist, have shed too much blood to give up the right to have thoughts, opinions, or the right to insist on social progress.

We move forward with the confidence that we and our allies will win. Your job, dear friend, is clear. Never a moment's rest until the beast is crushed. We must explain again and again what the forces of darkness are planning for our land. We must win ever larger numbers of friends, for our best weapon is a united people. *Demand that the Un-American Committee be dissolved immediately.* Not another dollar of our taxes for its evil work. *Demand that Gerhart Eisler be released to go home.* This must be his reward for fighting every decent American's battle.—THE EDITORS.



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A SPECTRE HAUNTS THE "TIMES"

Mr. Lawrence couldn't figure out why he was sent to Latin America. The story behind the assignment.

By JOSEPH STAROBIN

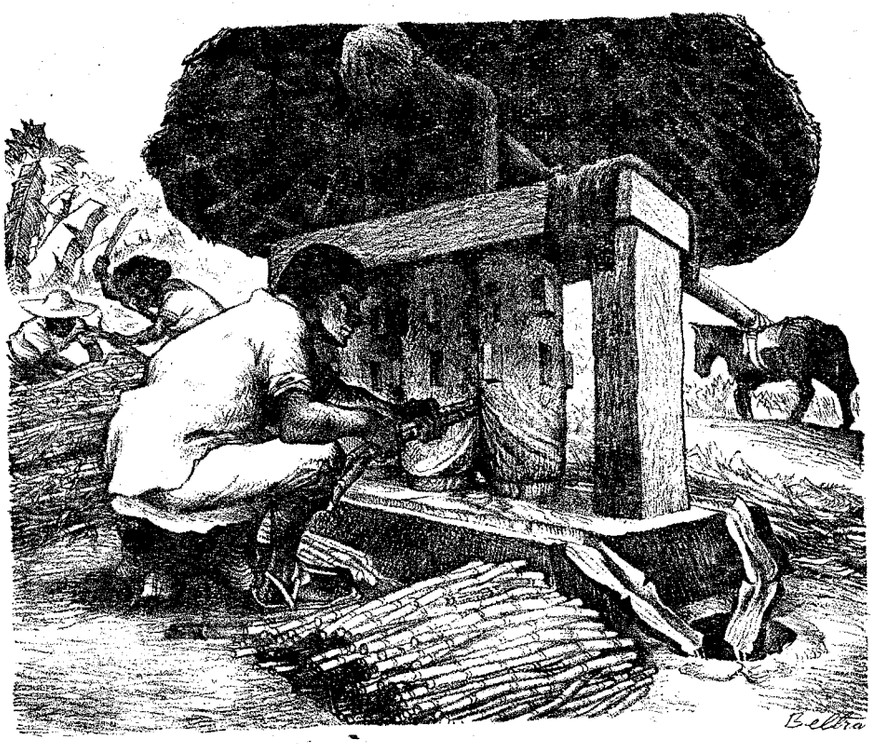
THERE is no other hotel like the Avila in Caracas, the capital of Venezuela. It lies at the foot of the mountain by the same name, set a bit higher than the residential quarter whose red-tiled roofs and blue and grey and pink balconies flicker excitingly as the sun goes down over the hills on the western side of the city.

Caracas is crowded; the buses tear past practically every crossing, and occasionally you can see a bus with the blurred letters "125th St. Ferry" on the back of it. But the hotel lies coolly and superciliously at the foothills of the Avila, with vast gardens stretching before immense window-paned terraces, and as night falls the pools of ever-running water are illuminated by red and green and blue lights in turn.

Said the reporter from the New York *Times*, as we were having a drink before dinner: "The Rockefellers built this hotel. They figured they ought to somehow turn back some of the dough they took out of this country. And here it is, making money for them."

This is the American hotel in Caracas. The oil company executives, the businessmen, the fly-by-night reporters stay here at twenty dollars a day. (Needless to say I stayed elsewhere.) That means, of course, that a darker-skinned Venezuelan, of whom there are four millions, would have difficulty getting any service here. Negroes, you understand. . . .

Mr. William H. Lawrence of the *Times* was on the last leg of his four-month trip through the hemisphere. The next day he was leaving for San Domingo, and as we sat on the terrace the Pan-American Airways man came up to assure him that his passage was all set.



AAA Gallery.

"Grinding Sugar-cane, Puebla," by Alberto Beltran.

Lawrence is genial, heavy-set, blond—a young man of whom the *Times* has so many. He did some fair pieces out of the Soviet Union and the new Poland a year ago. He went through the iron curtain, you will remember, and found it wasn't there. He believes he knows something about the Communists, but he had never been to Latin America before, and, as he put it to me, he hadn't written a word on this trip so far. He couldn't, he said, figure out just why he had been sent. I thought it was nice of Mr. Sulzberger, the owner of the *Times*, to give his reporters this kind of educational vacation, a way to let a good man roam the pasturelands. Especially, as Mr. Lawrence confided, since he was going back to Europe soon.

I went on from Venezuela to Central America and all the way back along the "north coast" to Trinidad and down to Rio, and what do you know—Mr. Lawrence had in the meantime published six articles about the "menace of Communism" in Latin America. It was big stuff, I heard. The *Times* itself editorialized. Congressmen were beginning to mutter about the "Communistic upsurge" in Latin America. "Public opinion" was reacting fast. And in Latin America itself, these sensational revelations got big plays in the conservative press, even bigger play than in our own country. For the peoples of Latin America are worldly-wise as far as North American journalism is concerned. They know that Mr. Lawrence didn't make this trip for the fun of it. As Anibal Escalante, the capable editor of Cuba's *Hoy* pointed out, big things are in the offing as far as North American policy is concerned, and the *Times* articles were written by way of conditioning the American public to them. This is the real significance of the Lawrence pieces.

BEYOND a doubt, Mr. Lawrence's articles have certain merits. They give reasonably accurate figures on the remarkable progress which some of the Latin American Communists are making. Of course, Lawrence pretends to know a bit more than he really does about the inside of the Communist movement. But it is true—and something to welcome, as I see it—that the

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Communists of Brazil, Cuba, Chile and Costa Rica are doing big things in a big way.

Mr. Lawrence does an equal service when he confesses that after twenty-five years of North American "leadership" and almost fifteen years of the Good Neighbor Policy, Latin America is still in the grip of a "low-wage, high-profit economy." The benefits of capitalistic endeavor, he says, "flow to too few people and the great masses live in squalor and ignorance." I heard that great Brazilian Communist, Luis Carlos Prestes, make the same indictment, as he spoke of the *"miseria, ignorancia e atraso do nossa povo."*

It is good for Americans to learn twenty-five Peruvian families control most of the wealth of that unhappy country . . . or that "in many countries a wage rate of thirty to fifty cents a day for unskilled native labor is not unusual" . . . or that "an official report of the government of Panama recently placed the average cash income per capita at $14.20 per annum."

Much more could be said along these same lines. Americans ought to ponder the fact that in the "normal" year of 1937, their total national income divided by population gave a figure of $525, whereas in Chile the per capita national income was $70 and in Uruguay $89. "We do nothing well," said the Brazilian sociologist Afranio Peixoto, "because our people are living in a perpetual state of malnutrition." In Rio de Janeiro, more than half of the men who reach working age die before they are twenty-nine—a figure to remember, and one which struck me cold as I ate and joked and talked with the leaders of the Brazilian Communist Party, most of whom were in their late twenties and early thirties. A person born in the United States has a life expectancy of almost sixty-three years; in Latin America, the high point is forty-seven and in Peru it is thirty-two.

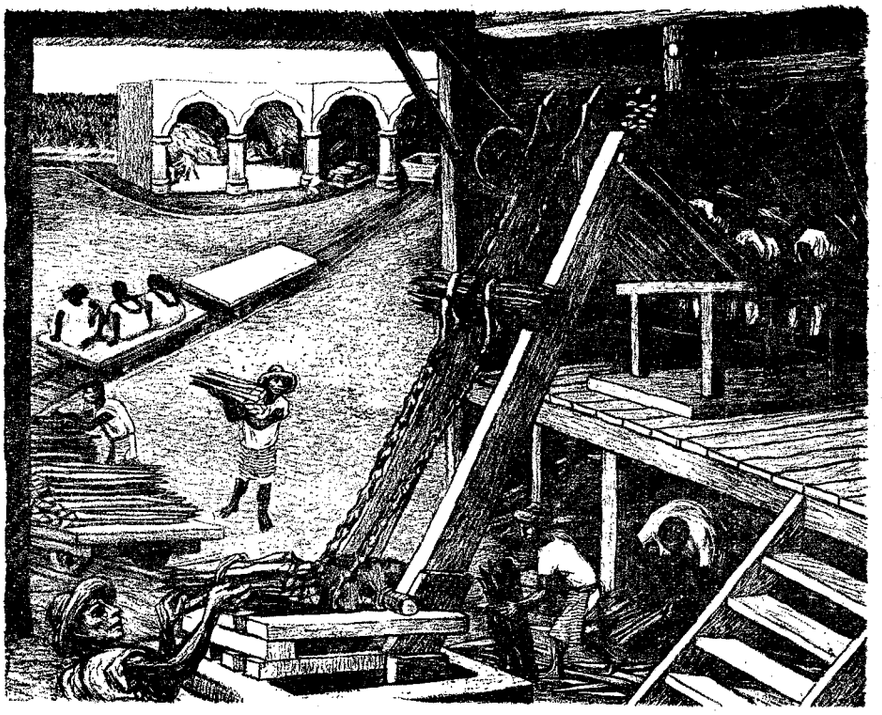
Yes—and think of this. In Washington, D. C., only sixty-one children out of a thousand will die at birth. But in Santiago de Chile, 204 out of a thousand will not live and in Bogota, Columbia, the figure is 191. As Charles Morrow Wilson put it in *Harpers Magazine* for July, 1942, "there are roughly 120,000,000 people in Latin America . . . at this very moment it is a good bet that at least fifty million of them are sick. . . ."

Neither the Communists of Latin America nor the faraway Soviet Union created or perpetuate these conditions, as Mr. Lawrence confesses. One good point of his articles lies in the fact that this admitted bankruptcy of North American leadership in the Hemisphere (now being fortified by guns and planes) is hardly a recommendation for the extension of such leadership to the entire world.

THERE are two main ideas in the Lawrence pieces: (1) that the Latin American Communists, though their leaders are unquestionably native, are functioning in the interests of Moscow and therefore the rise of Communist Parties somehow violates the Monroe Doctrine, and represents a menace to the United States; (2) that if only the American capitalist system, with its supposed virtues, were transferred to Latin America, and our own achievements here aggressively advertised, the Communist menace would be averted. Mr. Lawrence, you see, believes that merely repressing the Communists will not bring results. We must, he says, compete with their ideas by showing the Hemisphere how our capitalism works.

Let us take the second argument first. Ignore for the moment whether capitalism in the United States is quite as successful as it is cracked up to be, or whether it will continue the relative success that it has. It is, however, a great illusion to suppose that the peoples of Latin America are ignorant of why our capitalism brings relative "benefits" to our own people. Our Latin American brothers know only too well that one reason for our "success" is the fact that we live on the system of exploiting the hemisphere. Where do we get our oil, our coffee, our copper, our bananas, our tin? We get them from the Latin American world. Our big corporations take these commodities out of neighboring countires at ridiculously low wage costs. Our relative prosperity is a direct function of the super-profits which our big corporations exact in Latin America —both from raw materials and from the goods which we dump there at shamefully inflated prices. Latin America knows all this. Nobody has to advertise it.

Lawrence complains of the absence of a middle class; he indicts the oligarchy that rests on the outmoded system of land-ownership. But our big corporations are precisely the forces which have allied themselves with the Latin American feudal oligarchy. And it is this alliance which represses Latin American industrialization, inhibits both the liberation of the peasant, the rise of a middle class, and the formation of a modern working class. Dr. Ramiro Guerra, the well-known Cuban authority, says that 62 percent of the value of the sugar properties in his country is controlled by foreign



"Yucatan Hemp Plant," by Alfredo Zalce. AAA Gallery.

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capital (about half by United States owners). This pattern is equalled in Central America, where the United Fruit Company controls four million acres on both coasts. When the Venezuelan dictator, Juan Vicente Gomez, finally died in 1935, it was discovered that he was the greatest landowner in the Hemisphere, and had passed out to the foreign oil companies vast tracts at indefinite leases.

The holdings of American-owned firms run into millions of hectares, and as one authority writes: "Only a relatively small part of these company lands appear to be in actual use, the bulk of them being kept in reserve for possible expansion of the oil industry in the future." (Soule, Efron and Hess in *Latin America in the Future World*.) It is this system of feudalism on the land, with which American corporations are economically and politically linked, that represses the internal market. Here lies the nub of the major problem in Latin America.

Moreover, when native industry does develop, as it did during the war in many countries, the menace of American competition comes to the fore. The essence of Undersecretary William Clayton's program for Latin America is the reduction of trade barriers which would enable American corporations to buy into or force out of business native industry, and impose American domination against all competitors.

In the *Journal of Commerce* for April 15, 1946, Assistant Secretary Spruille Braden advanced the thesis that "if the unit cost of the article to be produced is materially higher than that of the imported article, it is clear that the proposed production is uneconomic, at least in its initial stages." This theory, while it would be valid for a rational world order, is simply an apology for ruthless American competition today. Obviously, in developing their own economies the Latin American peoples are not going to be as productive as we, and are not going to achieve the low unit costs of the highly organized American economy. The Soviet Union had the same experience. So did the United States in its own formative period.

I heard dozens of stories in Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil about how the policies of American capital inhibit native industrialization. Venezuela could not sell a small fraction of her oil in the hemisphere because American concerns (with oil extracted from Venezuela) stepped in and offered the oil at lower prices, backed as they were by world-wide economic power. The Brazilian glass industry, which developed during the war, is now up against the wall because American concerns shipped in enough glass at low prices to supply the market for a decade.

Thus, in reply to Mr. Lawrence, it must be said that the extension of American capitalism to the Hemisphere is by no means a blessing. The elevation of the internal market requires fundamental agrarian reforms which would directly challenge American imperialist tie-ups with the native oligarchy. It is the United States which impedes the growth of that very middle class whose absence Mr. Lawrence bewailed.

But here is the real joker. The one political force in the hemisphere which fights for agrarian reform, for native industrialization and modernization—is the Communist Party. The significant thing about Lawrence's pieces is that he never does give a clear picture of what the Communists in the hemisphere want. He makes himself appear as the protagonist of industrialization, modernization and democracy (though how the existing policies of American capital will bring that he does not say). The Latin American Communists are dismissed as favoring socialism and representing Russia. Actually, they are the ones who are

CHURCH AND STATE

IT WAS an evil thing that happened. A bad day for our country —and a bad sign for the future. Last week the US Supreme Court delivered a blow against the Bill of Rights, and gave encouragement to those who would remake America into the image of Franco Spain. By a five to four vote the tribunal decreed that it is lawful and right for the government of New Jersey to use public funds to transport children to parochial schools.

You don't have to be a constitutional lawyer to understand this case. The very first clause in the First Amendment to the Constitution proclaimed the separation of church and state as a foundation stone of American democracy: *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ."* And the people of New Jersey were the first to ratify the Constitution with its basic first ten amendments.

In his dissenting opinion Justice Rutledge underlined the obvious when he said that it is no more unjust "to deny attendants at religious schools the cost of their transportation than it is to deny them tuitions, sustenance for their teachers, or any other educational expense which others receive at public cost." He pointed out that New Jersey's action "exactly fits the type of exaction and the kind of evil at which Madison and Jefferson struck."

This is a ruling for which the hierarchy and agents of the Vatican have long been pressing in many states. It requires no prophetic vision to see how they will move on from here. It is easy to foresee how they will use this gaping loophole to advance toward their anti-American goal: the control of the schools, the mastery of the minds of the young.

Tom Jefferson sleeps at Monticello. But what about the living? What about all of those who profess his principles, who claim his heritage? There must be no concession, no yielding of hard-won rights. Here is an issue upon which all progressive Americans can unite—Protestant, Jew, Catholic and non-believer: NO PUBLIC MONEY FOR PRIVATE RELIGION!

LLOYD L. BROWN.

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fighting for the very program which alone can modernize, democratize, industrialize the hemisphere—short of socialism, which no one proposes today in any Latin American country. Such is the ironical fate of the *Times* which fits the news to print.

I heard Luis Carlos Prestes outline his program at a meeting of ten thousand Paulistas in the town of Campinas, a few hours by auto from the great city of Sao Paulo. It was a meticulously detailed program of how to increase the internal market, to raise productivity, to achieve land reform—all through the present inadequate but democratic Constitution. I heard Communist leaders in the Nuevo Circo arena in Caracas — while Lawrence was in that city—outline measures for agrarian reform which are fundamentally non-Socialist, and without which the current cancer of inflation and ruin in that country cannot be checked. I saw Manuel Mora, the talented Communist leader of little Costa Rica, steer a minimum tax reform through the Costa Rican Chamber of Deputies—which would make the wildest Republican wonder at the modesty of the Communist proposals for income taxes.

In view of all this, the charge that the Communists of Latin America represent Russia is pure mythology. They represent their own peoples and their own interests. They do not criticize the United States (contrary to a *Times* editorial on Lawrence's pieces) because they feel so strongly about American misdemeanors in Europe or Asia, or Russia's virtues. They criticize the policies of American corporations not for what they are doing in Iran but for what they are doing in Latin America.

Nakata.

Finally, the Latin American Communists, as I saw them, are scrupulous to avoid anti-American feeling, even when it becomes difficult to distinguish between our people and the policies of that small minority which speaks in our name, and owns our production plant. I remember addressing a small group of trade union leaders in Rio, telling them what I could about the American labor movement. They sat open-mouthed with admiration at the power and strength of our workers. A young leader of the traction and power workers, Pedro de Carvalho Braga, arose to make a short address in reply to mine. What remains with me was his emphasis on the fact that though he and his colleagues feel the oppression of American firms in every waking hour, they harbored no ill-will against our people as such.

Who then is menaced by Latin American communism? Only those who wish to perpetuate feudal and imperialist relations in the hemisphere. If Mr. Lawrence thinks our capitalism can work to change those relations, he is welcome to demonstrate how; but surely, in changing the imperialist and feudal relations among our neighbors, he will find that the Communists have long anticipated him, and that the job cannot be done without their cooperation. Indeed, they would be willing to cooperate even with him, if he seriously means to propose a different foreign policy from the one which the United States is now following. They suspect, however, that his articles were not published to bring about democratic change in the Hemisphere.

They suspect—and they are far from ignorant or naive — that the main purpose of the *Times* series was to condition our own public for the militarization of the hemisphere which is now under way. They suspect that Mr. Lawrence was sent to Latin America to bring proof of "the Communist menace" on the basis of which our public will be persuaded to accept the intensification of our current imperialist course.

Since that is the case, it may be remarked that this would be a mean plagiarism of an earlier effort—made by the Germans under Hitler, far more skillfully. You will remember—that effort failed.

portside patter

by BILL RICHARDS

News Item: Advocates of a ten-cent fare promise New Yorkers clean, fast, uncrowded subways with fluorescent lighting.

The ten-cent fare will make possible ultra-modern subways. Among the improvements planned are:

1. Electronic-vending gum machines that apologize when nothing comes out.
2. Advertisements with mustaches already drawn in.
3. Restrooms with Kilroy messages in gilt letters.
4. Handy racks containing the previous day's papers.
5. Velvet straps for those rare occasions when there are no seats.
6. Loudspeakers playing "Your Dime Is My Dime" and other popular favorites.
7. Atomic express trains that will get you to Times Square even before the real estate interests get your dime.
8. Modern trains that stop running from seven to nine and five to seven, thus eliminating the rush hour.

●

Once and for all: Is Hitler Really Dead?

The mysterious circumstances surrounding the death and/or disappearance of Adolf Hitler have been investigated by the FBI, Scotland Yard, G-2, Sherlock Holmes, and the famous Paris police, the Sorbonne.

There is some evidence that Hitler committed suicide and was cremated. Some say his ashes were placed in an hourglass and that he is finally serving Germany. However, many signs point to Hitler having been angry about the Nazis' defeat but not completely burned up.

The evidence that Hitler took poison is mere hearsay. According to one testimony he told Goebbels, "I'll see you in a little vial." It seems fairly certain that he decided against hanging around with the rest of the Nazis.

There is a group that maintains that Adolf didn't die but is hiding in America behind locked doors after changing his name to Richard. Other factions of this group claim that he is working under an alias for the Un-American Activities Committee. Still others are steadfast in their convictions that he is currently writing Hearst editorials.

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TEDDY ROOSEVELT HAD HIS NUMBER

A member of the Board explains why Citizen Tom should be banished. A too-true-to-life fantasy.

By CHARLES HUMBOLDT

The Board of Superintendents decided yesterday that Howard Fast's best-selling historical novel, "Citizen Tom Paine," was undesirable as reading matter for children and recommended that it be removed from the New York City school libraries.

—New York *Times*, Feb. 5, 1947.

How did this book get on our shelves? A book about Thomas Paine. Pause a minute. . . . A man whom that great President, Theodore Roosevelt—I repeat, *Theodore* Roosevelt—called a filthy little atheist. Now why should a man want to write a novel about a fellow who earned such a title from Teddy Roosevelt, the man who built the Panama Canal, one of the noblest works of God? It means there must be something rotten in that man's mind, too, a tiny sand-speck of corruption in his soul which attracts him to such an unworthy subject. Of course, I expect some wiseacre to get up on his hind legs and tell me that Tom Paine was a father of the American Revolution, as though I didn't know my history, but my answer is, we don't need such fathers. It's high time we became a little more selective about our history and cleared out some of these cheap cynics and irreligious know-it-alls trying to cash in on the fact that we're the most powerful nation in the world. Opportunists, that's what they are, buttering their bread as early as 1776 when a lot of honest conservative folks couldn't see which way the wind was blowing and advocated cool-headedness, an eternal virtue if there ever was one. We've been too romantic about our past, too generous about letting a lot of jacks of all trades, like Jefferson and Paine, take credit for our immortal destiny. You don't see anyone writing a popular book about Alexander Hamilton, who didn't babble about freedom, but used his noodle in the service of free *enterprise*, less exotic but more solid, more solid, my friends. Think that over.

Now some of you may not have read Fast's book, as I have—the first forty pages. Don't let that trouble you. A man should never let his better instincts surrender to his mania for facts. You don't always have to jump in the water to know it's wet, do you? Well, you don't have to read Fast's book either. Because this is what I found in those first forty pages.

Fast makes Paine out to be apprentice to a corsetmaker and has him try a corset for size on a woman whose bosom is compared to the hills of Scotland. What kind of an obscene image is that? The hills of Scotland made fun of in a vicious scene of tugging, squeezing, squealing and roaring.

I ask you, what are we to think of a hero who gets drunk and curses with no excuse other than his misery—what kind of moral spine does he have? None, Paine had none. Teddy Roosevelt was right. You may tell me Thomas Paine was the man who wrote a few pamphlets for the colonists, and that he spent some time at Valley Forge, but he probably did this as part of his general contrariness and dislike of authority. I have this on the word of a very prominent psychologist, a friend of mine, who assures me that Paine hated his father and mistook the king for him. Besides, it's not the more picturesque behavior of a man but the little things he does that matter; does he brush his teeth more than once a day, does he take his hat off in an elevator, does he wait until the other person has finished speaking? You may smile, but if our heroes are going to be uncouth, the public school library shelf is no place for them. If Washington had told that lie about the cherry tree, I'd think twice about celebrating his birthday. I see by your serious faces that you agree with me. I'm glad.

A WORD about the author of *Citizen Tom Paine*. I understand that he is quite a young man, quite a young man, hotheaded and idealistic probably

"So you're sure you ain't seen that guy Paine?"

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as all young people tend to be. As a matter of fact, certain persons for whom I have the highest regard tell me that he is actually in favor of socialism. I do not tell you this to prejudice you against the particular book we have under discussion—everything must be considered on its own merits—but it is no coincidence that a writer who admires an undisciplined rebel like Paine, a congenital rebel, I might say, should also find himself allied with the chaotic East. I have nothing against Mr. Fast personally. He may be a very fine young man, indeed. But I will say that I abhor the thing for which he stands, I will resist it till the last breath, baring my breast to the common horde should it threaten to engulf our sacred institutions, and I am sure that you feel as I do. Keep your coarse cries away from our children's ears, Thomas Paine. Take your libertine out of their sight, Mr. Fast.

Let us not be misled by a lot of sentimentality over the conflicts of the past. We must look forward, not backward; we must be firm, not soft; we must learn to make decisions, no matter how painful, always for the sake of our charges, the great wonderful American people who don't always know what is best for them. For their sake, I say, ban the book.

There's just one unfortunate aspect to this whole thing. I think we must anticipate a certain amount of thoughtless protest against our decision. After all, the book has been widely circulated and I hear it has achieved considerable undeserved popularity. I would therefore propose that we couch our verdict in very flexible terms, so that in the event of noisy opposition we can adjust our position accordingly. The last thing we want to do is draw attention to ourselves over this matter.

American Writers Association, Inc.

70 West 55th Street, New York 19, N. Y.
Circle 7-0290

February 7, 1947

Mr. Louis Untermeyer
88 Remsen Ave.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Untermeyer:

I was much interested to read that you have criticized the "censorship" by the Board of Education of Howard Fast's book on Thomas Paine.

Freedom of the word means that citizens have full and free access to whatever books are written, without any slant being introduced to predetermine their choices. Our system of many publishers guarantees that freedom under normal circumstances.

The sale of Fast's book has been built up by a powerful political "apparat" using all the techniques which could be used to slant the sale of books in his favor. This is unfair competition with other, and perhaps better writers on Tom Paine. It certainly is an interference with free choice by the reader in accordance with his private preferences.

In addition, the book is acknowledged to be a carrier of political propaganda favoring institutions that are hostile to American political freedom and designed to create hostility among American citizens.

Do you agree with us that the American reader has a right to free choice of books and articles, without any interference with a political propaganda agency, and that any interference with that free movement of books to readers is in itself a form of censorship?

Sincerely yours,

Edna Lonigan

Edna Lonigan,
Executive Secretary.

The letter reproduced here requires no comment, and Mr. Louis Untermeyer's forthright answer to it speaks for itself. It is well to recall, however, that the American Writers Association was organized in the fall of last year to attack the American Authors Authority as a "Communist-controlled plan to establish a literary dictatorship." (The AAA was a plan first proposed by the novelist James A. Cain and adopted by the Screen Writers Guild to protect the rights of authors in copyright agreements.)

Among the leaders of the American Writers Association are Louis Bromfield, Clarence Budington Kelland, Clare Boothe Luce, John T. Flynn, Norman Thomas, Eugene Lyons, Max Eastman, Louis Waldman and Benjamin Stolberg. Its president is John Erskine.

MR. UNTERMEYER'S REPLY

Dear Miss Lonigan: Your letter astonishes me. Things have come to a queer pass in this free country when a writer is questioned and criticized for defending the work of a fellow-writer. I had always taken it for granted that a reader—let alone a writer—was free to like what he liked.

Apart from being a friend of mine, Howard Fast is a respected colleague. His work at the OWI came under my direct scrutiny—we had adjoining desks at that organization—and I envied him his ability to project a vision in terms of patriotic reality. I have always applauded his integrity, and I see no reason why I should cease doing it now.

Except for the direct challenge to my right to express myself, I do not understand most of your letter. It seems to be written in a kind of doubletalk, a jumble of awkward dialectics and irrelevancies. When you speak of Fast's books as "unfair competition" I frankly do not know what you mean. I began by saying I was astonished. I should end by saying that I am baffled. I cannot believe that an organization of American writers could sponsor such a letter as the one you sent me.

Very truly yours,

Louis Untermeyer.

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THE STRANGE CASE OF MR. McCANN

Counsel for the House Labor Committee, he doesn't want publicity—for good reason.

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Washington.

IT IS difficult to be surprised at anything in Washington anymore. Wherever you turn you run into ex-"liberals" freshly divorced from the government and now engaged in nefarious jobs—"liberals" such as that peculiarly repulsive young man who worked assiduously to undermine the Wagner Act while he was a member of NLRB and now is doing same for clients "who want the Act changed but not too much," as an associate explained it to me. This industrious young man, Gerard Reilly, in addition to spending much of his time on the matters before the House Labor Committee, is also running a weekly column for the Washington *Star*.

There is lots of money to be made in Washington these days. It is virtually running down sewers. Anyone who wants to take a swipe at unions, and/or New Dealers in government, and/or "Reds" and/or any workers who don't long for the "freedom" of looking for work without any "interference" from a union, can make a pretty penny.

But with all the talent around, and all the experts on unionism (such as the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee's star, Earl Reed, counsel for Weirton Steel, co-author of the old Liberty League brief on the Labor Relations Act which in effect advised employers to ignore the Act) so obliging as witnesses, it did come as a bit of surprise to meet my old acquaintance, Irving McCann.

For I found Attorney McCann in a little room, with no legend of any sort on its door, catty-corner across from the House Labor Committee. I had come up to take a look at him because I could not believe that Rep. Fred Hartley, chairman of the committee, had been quite so bold as to hire as counsel the character I had in mind.

It was at the end of the day and Mr. McCann was bidding a fat-faced young man farewell, while his stenographer, in an adjoining cubbyhole, showed signs of polite restiveness. Turning to me, McCann removed his horn-rimmed glasses, his only even faintly intellectual-looking asset, stared at me and replaced them.

"Remember me, Mr. McCann?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, without much warmth. "I remember you around here a few years ago." We talked a bit about the galley proofs of the record of the hearings, for which I had been looking when I learned he was the new counsel under the GOP majority. So, I said, I just thought I'd come up to see if it was he.

"Yes, I'm committee counsel," he said, grumpily, "but I'm not appearing at the hearings, I'm just spending all my time back here screening witnesses, and looking up material on the Wagner Act"—he waved at fat tomes. "The members are conducting the hearings. And I'd be just as happy if there wasn't a line of publicity on McCann."

"I'm sure of it," I said, "but I can't promise, Mr. McCann, that there won't be a line of publicity."

The chairman was running the hearings, not he, he was saying. I asked if the chairman were a lawyer. "No, I don't know what he was," he said, warming up. "I just learned today that he was a very fine musician."

"Well, think of that — I didn't know that," I said politely. That's the way it is in Washington, you don't always get to know a man's finer side. Later I was going through clippings on Rep. Hartley, and found that back in 1943 I had written a column on Rep. Hartley which began, "I wish that some of our lawmakers would do more of their skullduggery in private and less of it in public."

That was during the hearings on rent control conducted by the Committee to Investigate Acts of Executive Agencies Which Exceed Their Authority, headed by Rep. Howard Smith (D., Va.), and at the time Hartley had introduced a bill which would kill OPA and turn over its functions to other agencies. Its rent section bore a marked resemblance to proposals of the National Association of Real Estate Boards. Rep. Hartley had denied, in a mild sort of way, and without registering any offense at my questions, that it was written by NAREB personnel. Actually Hartley was NAREB's man, just as Sen. John W. Bricker was and is today.

MR. McCANN'S modesty made him content to chat about his boss rather than himself, but I assured him of my interest in what he had been doing since we last met. I remember the day well and how he showed me with such pride the report the committee was issuing knifing rent control, a report he himself had written—with the exception of a couple of paragraphs Jerry Voorhis fixed up, which Chairman Howard Smith liked because he felt they gave the report an impartial sound. McCann had been counsel, under the hard-boiled general counsel, Harold Allen of New York, for the Smith committee.

"Let's see, you went with NAREB when you left the Smith committee, didn't you?" I asked him now. NAREB is one of the most skillful and potent lobbies in Washington.

"No," he said testily, "I never went on the NAREB payroll."

"But you did address NAREB groups over the country?" I asked.

"NAREB did write out to some folks on the Coast who wanted me to speak," he said. "They hired a theater for me to speak in in Los Angeles. Then on the way out there, I addressed different groups. I made the arrangements myself. I talked in one city before the National Federation of Apartment House Owners, and in another before an NAREB audience." He listed the cities—Seattle, Spokane and others. Here he addressed the Chamber of Commerce "and property owners," there businessmen and realtors. It was a "lecture tour" on OPA. On this tour he helped set in motion, according to ex-OPA officials, the organized resistance to OPA, the campaign to do away with rent control, which has found its culmination in Republican-sponsored bills which now would do openly what Hartley and the others tried to do covertly in 1943—throw rent control to the wolves.

McCann insisted, virtuously, that he

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had been paid regular fees—of from $100 to $300 a "lecture" — not through the national office of NAREB, but locally, as he toured the country. Then he came back to the Capital and eventually went to work for the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee.

But going from the Smith committee, where he worked so closely with NAREB personnel who were virtually dictating the running of the hearing, to the broadening experience of meeting the landlords in their home territories, was just a detail in McCann's career.

"Didn't you have some connection with the previous Smith committee's hearings on the NLRB?" I asked. "You know, the hearings which were so famous for length and other things." These hearings were classic in Washington, up to the Eisler persecution by the Un-American Committee for their inquisitorial nature.

"Eight thousand pages long they were," he said enviously, getting out his coat and telling his secretary she could go. "No, sir," he said, turning to me, "I had no connection, and you'll not find it in the record."

"Well, unofficially, did you—"

"Nothing," he said, putting on his hat and making vague propelling motions toward the door, "except that I went up to the committee and asked for the job of counsel, as anyone might do, and was turned down."

"You consider yourself quite an expert on the NLRB, don't you?" I asked. No, no more than that he was once a *per diem* examiner for the board, he said. "You didn't feed the committee—?" I began.

But he was by now motioning me out, and holding open the door. He repeated he had nothing to do with the committee in its hearings on the NLRB.

His brief career as *per diem* examiner was in another period when McCann was posing as not only a liberal, but an emancipator. Before he got fired by the NLRB—where he obtained his job through John L. Lewis, I was informed by a former NLRB official—McCann, as a *per diem* trial examiner, went up to open a hearing in some New England town, and began with the approximate words: "Lincoln freed the slaves. I'm up here to free the working men." McCann is still an almost fabulous character about whom wonderful tales are told in NLRB circles.

Despite McCann's protestations, however, I am reliably informed that he did feed the Smith committee so-called information during its all-out attempt to amend the Wagner Act. The attempt was unsuccessful but with a Republican majority the danger to the act is real and imminent.

At some point in his history he was the object of disbarment proceedings brought in Wyoming, arising from a workmen's compensation case. The charges never were resolved, because McCann departed.

"It says Congress wants to change the rules—one Ball and no strikes."

BEFORE we became so involved in discussing the old Smith committee and the NLRA, and before he became so determined that I leave the office, Mr. McCann became slightly more expansive on the subject of witnesses on the pending anti-labor bills.

"Fifty unions have asked to testify already," he said, and repeated the word "fifty" as if to emphasize labor's impertinence. "Of course the chairman can't allow all of them to testify. He will allow the leading trade unions to appear. They will have their time beginning February 25. I can't say how much time we can give them, as we want to be wound up by the first of the month, and we have other bills to consider."

Fifty-seven bills had been referred to the House Labor and Education Committee at the last printing of the committee's bill of fare. Apparently only Rep. W. S. Cole (R., NY) has his mind on other than labor. Mr. Cole's bill would "provide for the promotion of moral, temperance and character education." I have yet to plumb the full range of Mr. Cole's thinking on the subject.

"What about public organizations?" I asked Mr. McCann. "I gather that you have heard only industrialists so far, or Congressmen who have their point of view. Are you going to let any public organizations testify?"

The counsel wrinkled up his nose. He removed his glasses in the familiar

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gesture which substitutes for thought processes with Mr. McCann. "Just what do you mean by public?" he asked.

"You know," I said, "the public—there is a public, isn't there?"

He looked blank. "I don't get what you mean," he said.

"You know," I went on brightly, "organizations such as consumers' groups, or something such as the NAACP—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," I said, spelling it out as he still looked uncomprehending.

"No," he said, definitely now, "I don't think we'll hear 'em. They got nothing to do with labor. Now if there was an FEPC bill up—but there isn't any."

Of course Reps. Adam Clayton Powell, Emmanuel Celler and four others have introduced fair employment practices bills that were referred to this committee. Of course, too, as I reminded him, the NAACP was to testify before the Senate Labor Committee. But it was all the same to Mr. McCann. I suggested farmers might be interested. "We're letting one farmers' group testify—claims it has millions of members," he said. "Don't know its name but Ed O'Neal heads it." It just happens, of course, that the American Farm Bureau Federation is the most reactionary of all the farm organizations.

With apparent satisfaction Mr. McCann told me he had lined up witnesses for the following week from Brookings Institution. "The men, no doubt, who made the report recommending outlawing of the closed shop?" I asked.

"No," he said, "the president of Brookings, Dr. Harold Moulton—and just one of the men who wrote the report."

That report, by Harold Metz and Meyer Jacobstein, goes much farther than the so-called "moderate" bill, S-55, the Taft-Ball-Smith bill which would in fact castrate the labor movement.

Meanwhile Rep. Hartley is at least conferring with a former Smith committee attorney, Hyman I. Fischbach, who waited until he left the committee (which almost entirely devoted itself to attacks on OPA) before he openly came out as the attorney for the National Retail Dry Goods Association and continued to attack price control.

"I never met Fischbach until I met him in Fred's office," said McCann, alluding to Rep. Hartley's office.

FISCHBACH is another story. His career in Washington less flagrant and colorful than McCann's, but with its own sinister overtones. There was the whole scandalous chapter, which this reporter exposed in two stories in the *Daily Worker*, of Fischbach, while counsel of the Smith committee, using the committee's official status to obtain confidential material from OPA files bearing on the triple damage case brought by OPA against the very rich and influential R. G. Lassiter of Florida and North Carolina. In this he was aided by the committee clerk, Mrs. Martha Crowley. This now defunct committee had spent much time and money "investigating" the Lassiter case, lobbying in his behalf both before and after the Supreme Court ruled against his Seminole Rock and Sand Co., later operated under another name.

But there were other cases not heretofore revealed, like that of the Bender Manufacturing Co. of East Orange, N. J., in which Fischbach interested himself while committee counsel. The tale of the Bender company is a strange one. In the middle of the war period the War Production Board had issued a regulation prohibiting the importation of industrial alcohol for perfume manufacture, as it was needed for rubber. Meanwhile a fixed price of 62½ cents a gallon was placed on such alcohol, all of which was supposed to be bought by the government. But the Bender company, by a curious circumstance, continued to get the alcohol from Puerto Rico—and at the low price. A WPB official by the name of Bernheimer, stationed in Puerto Rico, issued an interpretation that a product called "perfume mix" was not industrial alcohol. Bernheimer later resigned and went to the Bender company — something not unknown in Washington. Meanwhile Bender was shipping to his outlet in Puerto Rico a mild perfumed oil. In return, under Bernheimer's interpretation of the regulation, he obtained the "perfume mix."

But the OPA entered the picture. The Bender company claimed it was not subject to price control because of the mixing. For two years, while no one else could get any alcohol for perfume, this New Jersey firm was buying it up and selling it for $2.25 a gallon. Its specialty was mixing it up with different oils, a particular type for a particular company. It had all the big ones as patrons—Coty's, Rubenstein's—and in all boasted 300 different types of perfumes. The firm would bottle the mixed product and return it to the big company.

Actually it was not until the industrial alcohol unit of the Treasury Department wandered into the situation that the matter was called to the attention of the New Jersey district office of the OPA. OPA's district office then obtained an injunction in the US District Court restraining the company from further sales, and the company faced a possible criminal prosecution for violation of the price control act. Suddenly the perfume company went into action, and filed 300 applications for prices with the national office of OPA — having agreed, apparently, that it was subject to price control. However, the company set very high prices, based on the costs of component parts with the addition of labor and customary markups—although it was not paying for the component parts. OPA promptly pulled all its listings down. At this point the Smith committee through Fischbach entered the picture, treating the New Jersey company as if it were a chief martyr to bureaucracy. Fischbach went around lobbying about the injustices of OPA here, was all over the district office in New Jersey, terrifying the local officials with the implied power of a Congressional committee. Without any committee hearings, or anything other than star chamber proceedings, interrogation of persons by counsel, he obtained his objective—and if OPA ever continued with the case I could not learn of it. If a treble damage suit had resulted, half a million dollars could have been involved.

Such things were almost commonplace with the Smith committee. There was the counsel Aaron Ford, who resigned just before the hearings on the Botany and Forstmann mill cases, and then was retained by the mills. And Chairman Smith let him cross-examine the witnesses as counsel for the mills.

The labor committees of House and Senate had been pretty free from such goings-on up to now. Now that they are in control of such men as Rep. Hartley, however, the appearance of a McCann as counsel should not be surprising.

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A DISCUSSION

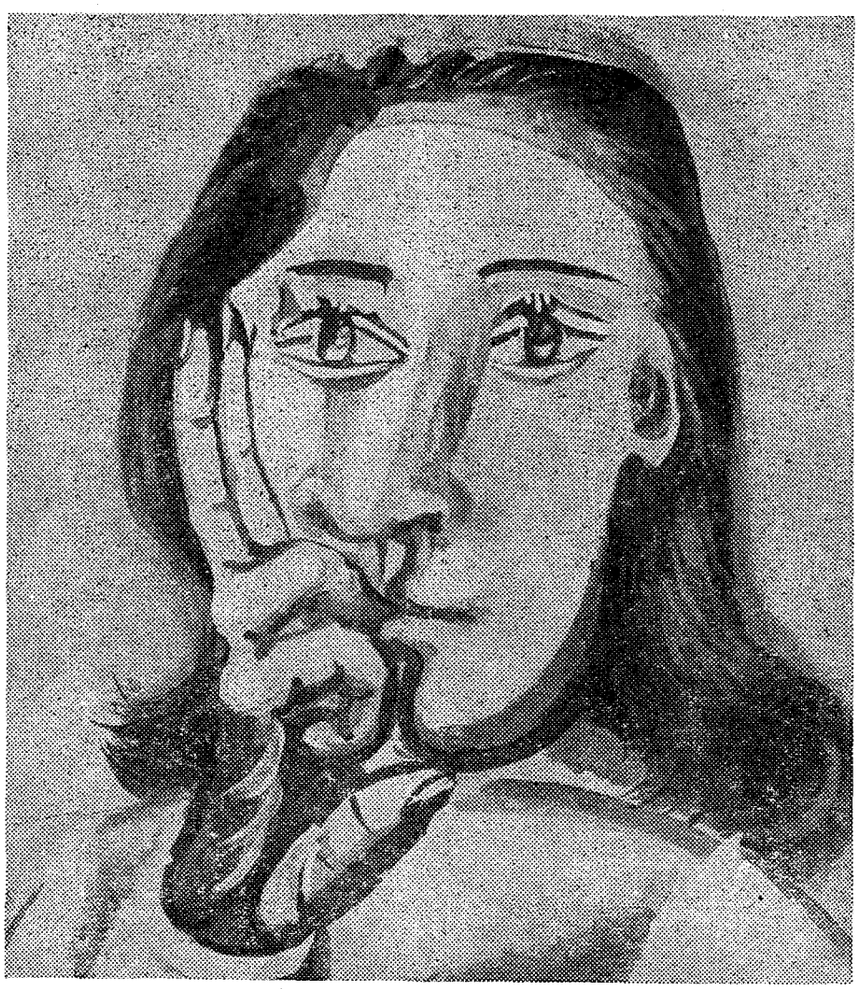
MATERIALISM AND JOHN DEWEY

Can Marxists agree with the Naturalists? An exchange of views on the relationship between politics and philosophical outlook.

1: CORLISS LAMONT

IN THE understanding of dialectical materialism and of the development of European philosophy during the nineteenth century, Marx's great collaborator, Frederick Engels, is a key figure. Actually, so far as published work is concerned, Engels made a considerably larger contribution to technical philosophy than Karl Marx. And his books will presumably always remain the chief nineteenth century source on the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism.

For many reasons, then, Howard Selsam's excellent summary of Engels as a philosopher (NEW MASSES, Oct. 8, 1946) was both timely and important. I found myself in general agreement with what Dr. Selsam said about Engels, but I did disagree with his side-remarks about the eminent American philosopher, John Dewey. Selsam seems to put Dewey in the category of philosophical idealists, those who think, like Hegel, that idea or mind or spirit is the fundamental and primary stuff of the universe. Thus Selsam states that the whole structure of Dewey's philosophy, along with other bourgeois systems, collapses because of its failure to correct this cardinal mistake of the idealists and to recognize the primacy of nature.



Kootz Gallery.

"Tete de Femme," tempera by Picasso. 1941.

Yet it has always been my understanding that in his philosophy Dewey establishes, as basic cornerstones, the following propositions: (1) That physical events interacting in a cause-effect process are prior and primary in the constitution of the cosmos; (2) that objective reality in this form, traditionally known as matter, exists antecedently to and independently of the human or any other conceivable mind; and (3) that mind emerges on the human level as a function of thoroughly material and very complex brains and bodies. These three principles stand in complete opposition to philosophical idealism and are ones that Engels himself supports. Dewey, as a twentieth-century naturalist, certainly is in accord with the general world-view of Engels and dialectical materialism. This does not, of course, negate the fact that many sharp issues exist between naturalism and materialism.

The point I wish to emphasize goes far beyond the particular case of Professor Dewey. In America since the First World War the philosophy of evolutionary naturalism has been steadily gaining strength in academic circles and recently has been tending to supplant the old Hegelian idealism that was dominant in this country for so long. This American naturalism, stemming from the great tradition of Aristotle and Spinoza, represents, I believe, the prevailing viewpoint today among the younger philosophers of ability in the United States.

This younger generation of thinkers received their training from such elder statesmen of naturalism as Mor-

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ris Cohen, who until his recent death was Professor Emeritus of the College of the City of New York, the late Prof. Frederick J. E. Woodbridge of Columbia University, and John Dewey himself. These three older philosophers have had many disagreements, but they agreed on the propositions that I have already stated. For them nature constitutes the totality of existence; and man is part and product of this vast nature that is his home. There is no room for the supernatural in naturalism's world-view (technically its ontology, or metaphysics).

American naturalism and dialectical materialism are in accord on other important points. For example, they both support a naturalistic psychology of the inseparable unity of body and mind and therefore rule out the theory of personal immortality. They both claim that modern scientific method, with its stress on the verification of ideas through experiment and observation, is the way to attain knowledge and truth. They both hold that the universe is a system of dynamically interacting events, that everything is constantly changing and developing. Naturalism's insistence on the dynamism of the cosmos and on the almost infinite interrelatedness to be found in nature and society comes close to the spirit of the three laws of motion as formulated by Marxist materialism.

Dialectical materialism definitely parts company with naturalism in formulating and emphasizing those three particular laws; in being a crusading philosophy; in taking a militant stand against religious supernaturalism and refusing to indulge in the evasive redefinition of religious terms; and in adopting a viewpoint frankly and honestly favoring the working class. I am indicating here only *some* of the issues between Marxist materialism and American naturalism.

While these two philosophies employ different terminologies — a fact that gives rise to much misunderstanding—I think it is of great significance that there are so many fundamental agreements between them, particularly in regard to their attitude toward the universe. In his recently published book, *Soviet Philosophy*, Dr. John Somerville throws light on this matter when he states that "a good deal of thinking that might otherwise be called materialistic presents itself as humanistic, naturalistic, empirical, positivistic, agnostic and the like. Much of it, in Engels' view, could appropriately be termed 'shame-faced' materialism." Naturalism has, in fact, sometimes been called a "polite" name for materialism. Be this as it may, I believe that it might be worthwhile, especially in the interests of American-Soviet understanding, if we more often discussed the similarities between American and Soviet philosophy instead of always concentrating on their differences.

Philip Evergood.

RETURNING to John Dewey, I must confess that in reading Dr. Selsam's account of Engels' philosophy, I continually said to myself: "Why, that is exactly what I learned from Professor Dewey." And I felt this to be true even in relation to Dewey's much-debated theory of knowledge. For instance, Dewey would agree completely on the following views attributed by Selsam to Engels: "The world is knowable. . . . Subjectively *we* can know it because we are part of it, not something distinct. . . . Practice lies at the root of all knowledge. Man learns through doing, through having to acquire objective knowledge of the real world to satisfy his needs. . . . Practice is the test of truth. Just as knowledge begins with practice, so it is in practice that we prove the truth of our ideas."

Dewey has been teaching these very propositions during most of his career as a philosopher. His stress on man "having to acquire objective knowledge of the real world to satisfy his needs" led to his conception of mind as primarily an *instrument* to solve human problems. Thus Dewey early discarded the word "pragmatism" to describe his theory of knowledge and adopted the term "instrumentalism." Dr. Selsam in his article on Engels writes: "Pragmatists, too, talk of practice in connection with truth, but they conceive it as subjective experience." This was true to a considerable degree in regard to William James' pragmatism and his inacceptable "will to believe." But John Dewey, while much influenced by James, eradicated such subjective elements from his own philosophy and developed his own theory of knowledge.

There is nothing particularly subjective about that theory of knowledge. Dewey asserts that an idea is true if in acting upon it or testing it

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out we find that certain concrete consequences claimed on its behalf are verified; an idea is true if, in our use of it, it actually accomplishes what it *purports* to accomplish. "It is in practice that we prove the truth of our ideas." The cure prescribed by a doctor for a patient is proved true if it and no other treatment does in fact bring about the recovery of the sick man. Similarly a cure proposed by an economist for our sick society will be proved true if it results in society regaining its health in respect to the ill or ills under consideration.

The same criterion of truth, that of verifying an idea through the consequences or effects following from it, holds for the solution of any human problem. Dewey believes that rigorous scientific method should be employed in testing out an hypothesis or idea and that perhaps the greatest need of the present is the application of real scientific method to economic, political and social affairs. Proof for Dewey is not a mere matter of personal, private experience, as Selsam implies, but an objective process operating on the principle that reliable knowledge is *socially verifiable*.

Dewey would not be content with the Engels-Selsam statement that "our knowledge is true when it adequately reflects the nature of things," because he would feel that this is an oversimplification and needs careful qualification. For Dewey the term *reflects* here smacks of too much passivity on the part of the human mind and does not do justice to the remarkable initiative and creativeness that characterizes human thinking. In a fundamental sense truth must, as Selsam says, "correspond to objective reality." But we must remember that since ideas are meanings, this correspondence is not equivalent to a photographic copy of reality and also that men are constantly *changing* objective reality, transforming it for their own purposes.

This transformation occurs not only through scientific controls and inventions as embodied in all sorts of economic and other familiar processes, but likewise in the very carrying out of scientific method in the laboratory. In their experiments, scientists, in order to follow the lead and discover the consequences of some hypothesis, are continually manipulating physical materials, shifting the position and relation of objects, mixing things together in totally new ways, making novel combinations. Thus they experimentally alter some controlled and isolated sector of the environment as a means to attaining knowledge. Truth-seeking is a dynamic enterprise.

It is in Dewey's description of scientific method and of his theory of knowledge that some critics claim to find evidences of idealism and subjectivism on his part. Now, Dewey's writing is sometimes difficult to understand, often ambiguous and occasionally downright ungrammatical. He is one of the philosophers most easy to confute through quotations out of context. It is possible, too, that there are real inconsistencies in Dewey's thought. Yet it is incontestable in my opinion that the main impact and intent of Dewey's massive philosophic system is thoroughly anti-idealistic and in agreement with the general world-view of dialectical materialism. Furthermore, his theory of knowledge, as I have indicated, has much in common with that of Frederick Engels.

WHEN we come, however, to Dewey's *application* of his theory of truth to specific realms, we find that he frequently goes astray. And of course there have been plenty of first-rate scientists all through the history of modern thought who have run wild when they tried to apply scientific method to fields lying outside their scope as experts. John Dewey's worst mistake in socio-economic thinking has been regarding Soviet Russia, an issue upon which I myself have been fighting him for years. His deep-going, bitter prejudices against Soviet socialism have prevented him from seeing clearly on the subject.

Dewey has been unable to apply objectively to the USSR his own rule of evaluating the worth and truth of an idea through its concrete consequences. His middle-class bias has blinded him to the good consequences of a planned socialist society in the Soviet Union, including—what is as plain as anything in all history—its tremendous achievements during the Second World War. Yet many American scientists who are most competent in their own domain are also, like Dewey, incapable of scientific thinking concerning Soviet Russia and therefore refuse to acknowledge the obvious success of Soviet socialism. This grievous fault does not disprove their ability as specialized scientists any more than the same fault disproves Dewey's ability as a naturalist philosopher in the particular fields I have discussed.

As for American naturalists in general, some of them are sympathetic to the Soviet Union and some are not. The fact that their attitude toward the universe is similar to that of dialectical materialism does not necessarily lead them to favor either socialism or the USSR. This should occasion no surprise. For we cannot with certainty deduce any individual's socio-economic opinions from his basic world-view or theory of knowledge. This point receives striking reinforcement when we reflect that many churchmen who believe in some outworn form of dualistic supernaturalism quite opposed to materialism are most friendly to Soviet socialism because of its indubitable ethical, social and economic accomplishments.

Thus they may think scientifically in reference to social-economic affairs, but not in reference to problems concerned with the nature of the universe as such. And our conclusion is the well-known one that those who reason objectively in one sphere frequently fail to carry over their objective method into a different sphere. These considerations cast valuable light on why philosophers, clergymen and other professional groups in the United States are or are not sympathetic to Soviet Russia. To make a wrong analysis of this situation would be a disservice to good American-Soviet relations.

Let me suggest another way in which the above observations have a direct implication for current international affairs. The fact that many American Christians find a number of their ethical aims being fulfilled by Soviet socialism and that American naturalists share a number of leading doctrines with Soviet materialists helps undermine the reactionary drive to line up the United States in a war crusade of the "Christian West" against the Soviet Union and its "degrading materialism." This issue manufactured by the anti-Soviet forces is palpably false. Both the materialist and naturalist schools of philosophy are part of the great tradition of Western civilization; both of them reject Christian supernaturalism and support the humanistic ethical goal of building a happier, more abundant life for mankind on this earth. The philosophic justification for enmity between the US and the USSR does not exist.

What I have tried to do in this article is to bring out the fundamental similarities between the dominant Soviet philosophy of dialectical materialism and the rising American philosophy of naturalism. I have also at-

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tempted to explain very briefly John Dewey's theory of knowledge and its relationship to that of Engels. It has not been my intention to revise either Marxist materialism in the direction of American naturalism or American naturalism in the direction of Marxist materialism. But as both a teacher of philosophy and a worker for American-Soviet understanding, I feel that it is important to see the precise relationship between these two great philosophies. In philosophy, as in science or any other sphere of culture, we want to have the frankest and most complete interchange of thought possible between the Americans and the Russians.

2: HOWARD SELSAM REPLIES

ALTHOUGH in sympathy with the aims of Dr. Lamont's well-thought-out statement, I cannot but disagree with certain of his premises and conclusions. It should be noted that this is not simply a debate between Lamont and me over our respective philosophical positions, but a three-cornered affair involving Dewey's philosophical position, Lamont's interpretation of Dewey and "American naturalism," and dialectical materialism.

Lamont's two chief points, as I interpret him, are: (1) Dewey's philosophy and American naturalism generally are sufficiently close to the Marxist world-view that the differences are far less important than the similarities and, therefore, they belong in one general camp as opposed to that of philosophical idealism and supernaturalism. (2) The greatest single immediate task of our time is friendship and peace between the United States and the Soviet Union and, therefore, philosophies that support such friendship have points of agreement far outweighing possible theoretical differences. Putting these two points together Lamont makes an impressive case, and his integrity and sincerity of conviction are evident not only in his article but through his activities over the past decade and a half.

Nevertheless, the problem before us is not merely one of expediency and popular propaganda, but of what is true and false in philosophy. In particular, is or is not Dewey's position and that of his disciples closer to materialism than to idealism? It may be interesting to reflect at this point that Marxists, who are constantly chided for "opportunism," are also continually criticized for "narrowness" and failure to "compromise" on ideological questions. The truth is that Marxists hail and welcome heartily all who are to any extent working for progressive ends, but they refuse to identify such agreement, on no matter how important practical issues, with scientific truth and theoretical clarity. A Rosicrucian may be friendly to the Soviet Union or the labor movement in America but that does not make him right in his conception of the universe. Neither does a professional philosopher's good will towards the Soviet Union (as indisputable, for example, as that of Ralph Barton Perry) require him and a Marxist to agree on their conceptions of reality.

The purpose of the above has been to narrow the scope of this piece by confining attention to what is philosophically true, rather than to how "men of good will" should lay aside all prejudices and predilections in their struggle for a better world. On the latter point there is no disagreement possible with Dr. Lamont. The real question is, what is Dewey's philosophy? Is it close to dialectical materialism? Is it progressive, in terms both of science and society?

Dr. Lamont's approach to the relationship between Dewey, and American naturalism generally, and Marxist materialism is a natural and understandable one. He carefully avoids the error others have made—that of trying "to revise either Marxist materialism in the direction of American naturalism" or *vice versa*. All he asks is that, in the interests of American-Soviet understanding, these two philosophies look toward what they have in common rather than what divides them. As he sees it, there is in America a healthy progressive philosophical movement, largely under Dewey's inspiration, that is so near materialism as to make them natural allies against supernaturalism, especially inasmuch as both have as their ethical goal "building a happier, more abundant life for mankind on this earth." This is a worthy aim and with it there can be no quarrel. One admitted difficulty is "Dewey's middle-class bias" which "has blinded him to the good consequences of a planned socialist society in the Soviet Union." Lamont recognizes this to be a "grievous fault" but I, for one, fear he minimizes it with extraordinary understatement. The record of Dewey's "blindness" toward the Soviet Union since about 1931 is one of intense hatred that has led him to support every anti-Soviet movement —even to the extent of being cool to the war against the fascist Axis because the Soviet Union was an ally.

Now the real question is not the one Lamont poses: that there is no necessary deducible relation between an individual's theory of knowledge or world view and his socio-economic opinions (which he reinforces by reference to clergymen who are friendly to Soviet socialism). The real question is: does or does not Dewey's hostility to the Soviet Union and everything Marxist bear a direct relation to his philosophical thought? Further, is this "American naturalism" a "shamefaced materialism," or is it rather the left flank of supernaturalism and philosophical idealism designed to protect the center and the right from attack by the materialists on the left?

IN THE interests of conciseness and clarity we shall examine here only the philosophy of Dewey rather than that of the somewhat amorphous "naturalist" movement generally. This is a big enough task and one that will require many papers and books for its completion.

For at least forty years men have complained of the ambiguities and equivocations in Dewey's philosophical position. They have asked him repeatedly to speak more clearly, but this he never does. One thing, however, is clear—*Dewey has always been an outspoken opponent of materialism*. He condemned it in his first published philosophical paper, "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism" (*Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, April, 1882), in which he maintained that any materialist philosophy, actual or possible, was self-contradictory. He is still sniping at it in his last published volume, *Problems of Men*, in 1946, without ever, in all his twenty-seven published books and countless additional articles, defining materialism in a way a materialist could recognize, and without ever attempting to deal with dialectical materialism. This is surely a blind spot of the first order.

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It is extremely significant that many of the most important contemporary philosophers have sensed the idealism implicit in Dewey's method and approach. Santayana accuses Dewey of standing the universe on its head—that is, of deriving it from experience rather than experience from it (See: *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 257f).* Why, Santayana asks, did Dewey not work out his moral and intellectual system within the frame of naturalism? He answers that Dewey couldn't do this because "it is an axiom with him that nothing but the immediate [that which is given in immediate or unanalyzed experience—H.S.] is real" (*ibid.*, p. 225). His conclusion is that in Dewey's philosophy things "must never be supposed to possess an alleged substantial existence beyond experience" (*idem*).

In similar vein, Bertrand Russell, discussing Dewey's logic of inquiry, says: "Inquiry, in his system, operates upon a raw material, which it gradually transforms; it is only the final product that can be known. The raw material remains an unknowable. That being the case, it is not quite clear why it is supposed to exist" (*ibid.*, p. 154). This statement certainly shows, to say the least, that Russell suspects Dewey of being closer to idealism than to naturalism or materialism. What is this Unknowable that Russell finds? The late Professor Savery points out that for Dewey it is "neither physical nor mental" but a neutral something as in the philosophy of James and others (*ibid.*, p. 496). Savery further indicates that for Dewey all knowledge is only in the future; in the present there are only claims to knowledge or hypotheses (*ibid.*, pp. 503f). He further shows that "a very important problem in philosophy," that of the nature of the external world, Dewey leaves unsolved and at times does not seem to regard it as a problem at all (*ibid.*, p. 508). Is this compatible with naturalism or materialism?

Hans Reichenbach writes: "We do not think that Dewey's nonrealistic interpretation of scientific concepts is tenable" (*ibid.*, p. 164). He is also referring to Dewey's basic doctrine that all objects of scientific knowledge

W. E. B. DU BOIS

On the occasion of his seventy-ninth birthday NEW MASSES extends greetings to Dr. Du Bois, our distinguished contributing editor. Born on Feb. 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Mass., William Edward Burghardt Du Bois is one of the greatest of living Americans. As our associate editor Herbert Aptheker has written, "No single individual represents in his own person so clearly as does Du Bois the gifts bestowed upon America by the Negro."—THE EDITORS.

are mental constructions (derived ultimately from immediate experience). This holds true equally of H_2O or electrons, concerning which Dewey wrote: "the existential status of the electron is still, for example, a matter of controversy" (quoted, *ibid.*, p. 508). (It is to be noted that Mach said the same of atoms.) Reichenbach, after skillfully showing that Dewey's whole approach leads to the view that the moral and esthetic qualities of things are at least as *real* as their physical properties, comments: "There are ethical systems which for instance consider the idea that private property is sacrosanct as a demonstrable truth, in the same sense as it is demonstrable that private property is destructible by fire. It is the danger of pragmatism that its theory of reality is made to order for ethical philosophies of this type. . . . It seems to us a basic insight of modern ethics that moral judgments vary with the structure of the individual, and that, as this structure is highly determined by the social environment, moral judgments vary with the social structure of society" (*ibid.*, p. 180). He further argues that Dewey plays fast and loose with the concepts of *appearance* and *reality*, the distinction between which is fundamental for all thought and practice.

Many further examples could be given of similar criticisms of Dewey by his academic contemporaries, none of whom are materialists but all of whom recognize inconsistencies and idealist tendencies in Dewey's philosophy. I shall not cite Roy Wood Sellars' astute and hard-hitting criticisms (in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. III, 1943) since Sellars is sufficiently close to Marxism to make good use of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* in his criticism of Dewey and of positivism and pragmatism in general. The point of all this is that Lamont is wrong in making it appear that Marxists alone criticize Dewey from the left and alone are troubled by the inherent idealism in his thought. The above materials certainly show that there is at least room for grave doubt as to where Dewey stands.

Let us now examine Dr. Lamont's own analysis of Dewey's position. At the outset it should be said that if Lamont misinterprets Dewey he stands on the side of the angels in the way he does it. He reads into Dewey the good healthy position he wanted to find at the time he was studying philosophy. But it has been the special and distinct role of positivists and pragmatists during the past fifty years to appeal to scientifically-minded students. Outright idealism and supernaturalism had become completely unacceptable to the more alert college students and these schools were ideally suited to appeal to such thinking persons, rebelling against outworn ideas and traditions, with something that seemed progressive, modern, even radical. But the upshot was to keep them from moving to a clear-cut materialism, which would be the logical outcome of this trend.

Lamont's statement of the three basic cornerstones of Dewey's philosophy is unexceptionable as a statement of the underlying principles of materialism and even of dialectical materialism. The only trouble is Dewey *never* has accepted any of the three and has, to the contrary, categorically rejected all three. Let us take them in Lamont's order: (1) "That physical events interacting in a cause-effect process are prior and primary in the constitution of the cosmos." In the 1882 article referred to Dewey stated: ". . . if the mind thinks it finds

* This is a large volume, published in 1939, containing a biography of Dewey, a bibliography, seventeen essays by that many contemporaries on most every phase of his thought, and a long reply by Dewey.

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in them [phenomena] such a relation [that of cause and effect], that relation must be brought to the phenomena by the mind itself." He has never changed his position on causality, as can be seen from his emphatic rejection of causality as an "ontological category" [that is, as holding in the real world] in his *Logic*, of 1938 (p. 462). Obviously events do not for him interact "in a cause-effect process." Again, they are not "physical events" as was pointed out by Savery in the sentences quoted. Finally, Dewey does not hold any such thing to be "prior and primary in the constitution of the cosmos." There is at best the "Unknowable" that Russell indicated. We must reject point 1, therefore, on all counts as having nothing in common with Dewey's position.

The second cornerstone of Dewey's philosophy Lamont sets forth in the following proposition: "that objective reality in this form, traditionally known as matter, exists antecedently to and independently of the human or any other conceivable mind." This would be perfect, if true, but unless I and many other critics of Dewey are badly mistaken, it is precisely this that so much of his philosophy is designed to deny. Dewey's greatest bugbear, in fact, is the notion of "antecedent realities"—that is, any reality prior to experience and the process of inquiry. He writes in *Quest for Certainty*, "A genuine idealism and one compatible with science will emerge as soon as philosophy accepts the teaching of science that ideas are statements not of what is or has been but of acts to be performed" (p. 138). If words mean anything, Dewey holds that genuine idealism, which is a good philosophy, will arise as soon as philosophy denies that our ideas, our propositions concerning the world of nature, really are statements concerning an objectively existing reality.

Dewey earlier said of his philosophy, "Insofar as it is idealistic to hold that objects of knowledge *in their capacity as distinctive objects of knowledge* are determined by intelligence, it is idealistic" (*Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 30). The full meaning of this, of course, can become clear only through a study of Dewey's whole work, but this much is evident: the world of both everyday life and of science is a creation of our minds out of the flow and flux of immediate experience. Atoms and galaxies, as well as the world before men appeared on the scene, are fashioned out of our experience. This was clearly recognized by Murphy when he pointed out what he called "a skeleton in the closet" of Dewey's metaphysics. This skeleton is the discrepancy between Dewey's conception of experience and the naturalistic or materialistic conception, which regards it as "the essential link between man and a world which long antedates his appearance in it" (*Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 221). What happens to Lamont's antecedent realities? Murphy says that the early Dewey "was still too much of an idealist to refer directly from thought to its object" (*ibid.*, p. 212).

But when we turn to the later Dewey we still find the same thing. What does he mean when he attacks "the claim of physical objects, the objects in which the physical sciences terminate, to constitute the real nature of the world . . ."? (*Quest for Certainty*, p. 195). Can this mean anything else than to deny that science can know the world? Is this not to deny that we can derive man and his consciousness from the physical, astronomical, geological, biological worlds, as the scientific and materialist position believes it can do? Dewey says, continuing where I broke off quoting above, that such a claim "places the objects of value which our affections and choices are concerned at an invidious disadvantage." Murphy, Morris R. Cohen and others have criticized Dewey's position as anthropocentric. Cohen asks whether Dewey's philosophy admits of propositions about the origin of life on the earth or the geological ages preceding the advent of man. (See, for Dewey's discussion of this, *Problems of Men*, pp. 195-198.) I, for one, do not believe Dewey answers this question, which Lenin regarded as one of the crucial tests of an idealist philosophy.

LAMONT's third proposition on Dewey is: "that mind emerges on the human level as a function of thoroughly material and very complex brains and bodies." This runs counter to the general direction of Dewey's thought, because for him matter, brains, bodies are scientific objects and hence symbolic devices or constructions linking together the things of experience. (See, for example, *Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 537f.) If this be the case, then they certainly cannot be taken as the basis of experience any more than for Ernst Mach or his followers, whom Lenin so magnificently dealt with in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

Now I admit Dewey is ambiguous on this question. Sometimes his starting point seems to be nature, environment, organism, and from this he derives men with their thought and experience. But at other times, and in my opinion more truly representative of his basic approach, the starting point is "immediate experience," out of which the self and its object, matter and mind, organism and environment are analyzed or from which they are abstracted. (See, for example, his statement in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 541f. Murphy, Piatt, Parodi, Stuart and Santayana all see this ambiguity and discrepancy.) I believe that much of Dewey's stylistic difficulty, like his equivocations and ambiguities, is rooted in this contradiction between an essentially materialist and an idealist starting point to the question of knowledge.

Obviously I have not taken up all the questions raised by Dr. Lamont's essay, nor would it be possible to do justice to them in less than a book. One of the reasons for this is Dewey's own prolixity and his refusal to discuss such issues as Lamont poses in unevasive terms. He is, as Sellars has so well said, "a monumental, somewhat perverse, thinker." I have tried to show that he is against materialism, that he is a kind of idealist. What Lamont fails to see is that today antimaterialist philosophers do not call themselves idealists—they call themselves "empirio-critics," Machians, Humeans, Pragmatists, Experientialists, Instrumentalists.

It is to Lamont's credit that he has raised these questions so clearly and sharply. It is the long overdue task of American Marxists in the field of philosophy to appraise critically and thoroughly this philosophy which has had so much influence on at least two generations of Americans.

A few final words are necessary on Dewey's social-political position and its relation to his philosophy. If there is no objective truth, but only what Dewey calls "warranted assertibility," then a science of society that can serve as a basis for directed social change is impossible. If the future is unpredictable, which follows from Dewey's denial of causality in nature and society,

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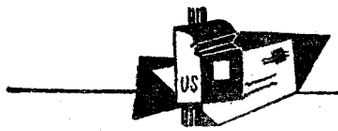
then social planning, the very foundation of socialism, is a gratuitous and hazardous task. He says, to give one example, ". . . planned policies initiated by public authority are sure to have consequences totally unforeseeable —often the contrary of what was intended . . ." (*Freedom and Culture*, p. 62). If objective conditions, social life, rooted in the mode of production, do not determine social consciousness, and that they do not Dewey forever reiterates, then the mainspring of any social change is a changed consciousness which arises by a kind of immaculate conception out of the mind itself. Dewey illustrates this point copiously in his *New Republic* series on the Soviet Union in 1929 (reprinted in *Characters and Events*, vol. I) when he insists that what happened in Russia was not an economic or political revolution, but a psychological-moral one. Somehow the Russian people got a new conscience (a cooperative one) in the fall of 1917, and it was this that caused all the social changes that followed.

The above is enough to suggest that a thorough study of Dewey's whole philosophy would establish quite satisfactorily the fact that his anti-Marxist, anti-Soviet mania, bordering on the paranoic, is not an accident, a regrettable aberration, but a logical product of his anti-materialist "metaphysics" and theory of knowledge. Nor is it an accident that Sidney Hook, George Counts, John Childs, leading anti-Sovieteers and divisive forces in American politics, are devout Dewey disciples, as is Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., our new Red-baiting specialist, who praised pragmatism in his *Age of Jackson* as against "enslavement" by historical theory.

NEW MASSES *was happy to publish the original article on Frederick Engels by our contributing editor, Dr. Selsam: it did a real service in placing, for many new readers, Engels' towering position in philosophy. It stimulated much discussion. Needless to say our own position in the above exchange coincides with Dr. Selsam's. We plan to continue our presentation of Marxist philosophy and we hope to persuade to our viewpoint many who today disagree with us, but who are increasingly attracted to dialectical materialism. We invite our readers—Marxist and non-Marxist—to join us in these discussions.*—THE EDITORS.

mail call



Marxism for Students

TO NEW MASSES: I was happy to hear that NM will soon publish more articles on the student movement. NM can play an important role in the growth of clarity and leadership among students if it will devote a little space to their problems. I wish to raise a point which I am sure will not be discussed in the forthcoming articles.

Recently a discussion began among some Communist students on the emphasis to be placed in our movement upon Marxist training for roles in our future professions. At the present moment there is little or no aid given to the student who desires to analyze his vocational field in the light of Marxist teachings. It has been our belief that as long as we restrict our ideological warfare to the field of politics alone we shall continue to find that all students, Communist as well as others, will serve to uphold capitalism. Can we rest satisfied if we persuade a student to vote for Foster while at the same time as a psychologist he propagates Freud's concepts, as a sociologist Weber's ideas or as an economist Keynes' theories? Experience has shown that membership or participation in progressive organizations will not guarantee that the eight hours a day spent in vocational work will contribute to the welfare of the working class.

The student movement of today is mainly preoccupied with the necessary problems of the fight for housing, extension of educational opportunities, higher subsidence for GI's and education of the campus to the role of labor. These tasks are vital but we feel that if alongside of this we fail to give students the advantage of a Marxist orientation in their future fields, we will have failed to make the one contribution which the Communists alone are capable of making. The reason we have failed to do so before may be laid to the depression period of the Thirties, when the student faced a society which rejected both him and his skills. This has left us a heritage of "campus activities" majors who are killing time waiting to enter the class struggle as industrial workers and imbued with a contempt for mastery of academic fields.

The Communist movement has a contribution to make to society that should include leadership to all sections of the nation. In Europe Communist scientists, artists and social scientists aid the struggle for socialism by being the best workers in their fields and bringing to their fields the fruits of a hundred years of Marxist thought. They are making their contribution alongside the working class. Shall we deny American progressives the same opportunity?

I am a student at the University of California at Berkeley.

Berkeley. M. B.

From Rev. White

TO NEW MASSES: Prejudices, superstitions, grudges, and the like have more and more come to seem to me devastatingly important hindrances to clear and rational thinking, and to social progress. I have tried, in the accompanying verse, to express what I'd like to see done to the whole lot of them:

BULLETIN

O friends, I have a handy china-shop,
Wherein I promptly thrust each ugly piece,
Antique or modern, that I'd like to drop
And let its shattering bring soul's release.
Here superstition's figures, warped are stored,
Imagined injuries, and grudges glum,
Resentments, prejudices—loathly horde!—
Where quarrels' dusty hand-me-downs have come.
Yet, O my friends, space still upon the shelves
Could take your contributions of like banes,
In case their hated forms disgust yourselves.
And when, in well-filled shop, no gap remains,
My plan, in which I know I'll have your aid,
Is then to goad a bull, 'mid crashing din
To wreck the outfit, till in such blest raid
My bulletin becomes grand bull-let-in!

New York. ELIOT WHITE.

Congrats

TO NEW MASSES: I wish to commend the editors of NM for the publication of "A World 'Christian Front'?" by V. J. Jerome (November 26) on the role of the Vatican, operating under the cloak of religion as an international center of reaction.

PETER V. CACCHIONE,
Councilman, Borough of Brooklyn.

TO NEW MASSES: Let me congratulate you for bringing to NM the acute observations of Joseph Solman in his reviews on art, thus finally opening the pages of your magazine to a broader interpretation of the arts. Solman's approach has the soundness, completeness, vigor and scholarship of both the critical analyst and of the practicing craftsman.

New York. JOE WOLINS.

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review and comment

THE LITTLE MAG

As Ma Joad once said of the people, the little magazines will just keep comin' on.

By JACK CONROY

THE LITTLE MAGAZINE: A HISTORY AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY, *by Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen and Carolyn F. Ulrich. Princeton University Press.* $3.75.

HISTORIANS of the literary magazine in America are confronted with a difficult and baffling task, for the evanescent publications under scrutiny ordinarily wing as brief a course as that of Maytime ephemera, but in a much more stormy and frigid climate than brief-lived insects are compelled to brave. This was particularly true in the desperate Thirties, the most fruitful period (numerically, at least) for the little magazine.

Professor Hoffman and his colleagues designate 1910 as the opening year of the little magazine "renaissance." Within a short time after the beginning of the second decade of this century, *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* was launched on its remarkable career of innovation and discovery in Chicago, and the *Masses* appeared as a radical journal in which politics and art still maintained separate compartments, to a large extent. Of course, there had been previous examples of the little magazine as we define it today: a periodical of small circulation and even smaller financial resources, independent in editorial policy, swimming angrily against the current of conservative mores in literature and art. The *Dial*, which lived from 1840 to 1844, never had more than 200 subscribers on its list, yet it published the work of Emerson, Thoreau and others of equal prominence. There were Reedy's *Mirror*, the *Chap-Book*, and *The Lark* in the Nineties.

The First World War brought to earth many of the skylarks of the New Poetry movement sponsored by Harriet Monroe. This movement had inspired the founding of a number of little magaines with talented contributors. Everybody now knows about the wave of cynicism and disillusionment that sparked and often characterized the little magazines following in the wake of World War I. It was in the Twenties that Hemingway and not a few other American writers seceded from life in the United States and found sanctuary in the salons of Paris, where literary esthetes were chafing under the fetters of form and asserting their right to freedom of language. Often their response to the domination of the dollar sign over our national culture took the form of total rejection, as in Henry Miller's admission: "I took to the opium of dream in order to face the hideousness of a life in which I had no part. As quietly and naturally as a twig falling into the Mississippi, I dropped out of the stream of American life."

A very practical benefit to the expatriates was the disparate rate of exchange: a dollar would go a long way. Also, French printers were cheaper, so it was possible to publish an attractive little magazine at low cost. *transition* (characteristically spelled with a lower-case t) was founded by Eugene Jolas in Paris in 1927, and soon became a bellwether of the forces fighting the Revolution of the Word. The intention of *transition* was "to present a synthesis of German expressionism, of dadaism and of surrealism; to revolutionize language, to present a new idiom 'metaphorical and topical, an idiom that might express the subtlest nuances of the psyche.'" The editor searched for a new literary form to convey this program, and advanced one he called the "paramyth," involving the verbal innovations and multilingual inferences made more familiar by James Joyce. Here is a portion of a "paramyth" offered as an example: "In those days a great disquiet night-haunted men and women. The thunder cities fevercried, the remotest villages sensed the trepidation, ships on the high seas felt electric waves currentcrickling through their bodies. . . ."

The Little Review, establishd by Margaret Anderson in Chicago, was an immediate spiritual ancestor of *transition*, though it was more catholic in its selections. James Joyce's *Ulysses* appeared in installments in its pages, four issues being seized and burned by the Post Office Department as a consequence. Miss Anderson had bludgeoned some support for her review from wealthy patrons of the arts, but it was not enough. She gave up the struggle on American soil, and joined the expatriates in Paris in 1921.

Experimental magazines likes *The Little Review* and *transition* almost without exception scorned such mundane concerns as economics other than the necessary matter of food and shelter and some way to pay the printer at least a portion of his bill. But the financial earthquake of 1929 brought the Yankee secessionists to grips with reality as effectively as the guns of World War I had jarred the delicate sensibilities of the pre-war poets, a great many of whom became misanthropes and apostles of despair.

At the beginning of the Great Depression, most publishers of periodicals joined in the hysterical effort to exorcise hard times—to deny the existence of starvation in the midst of plenty. But many earnest young writers were no longer content to diddle with metaphysical abstractions; they began to reiterate the angry query: why? Shut off from the conventional avenues of expression, the proletarian writers labored over blurry mimeographing machines, cajoled skeptical printers, hawked bundles of their handiwork at meetings and from door to door. Everything was so new that much of the work they did now appears crude, hastily conceived. But the vitality was there—it was life challenging death. The list of writers

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sponsored by the proletarian magazines is a long and distinguished one. Among them are Don West, Ben Field, Nelson Algren, Sol Funaroff, John Malcolm Brinnin, Benjamin Appel and Norman Rosten.

The proletarian magazines often were the victims of an impatient or supercilious attitude on the part of critics who maintained that they did not publish "literature" but "propaganda" indefensible from any but a utilitarian standpoint, and of little value even from that one. It is true that many writers were guilty of an excess of zeal in trying to make their messages stick and that critics applying an economic yardstick to literature often were a bit intolerant of those who still managed to soar blissfully aloft among rosy clouds shielding them from brutal and saddening scenes on the earth below. Some of the most dogmatic of the left-wing critics burgeoning in the depression era have fallen to rebuking their own wraiths, now that it is no longer fashionable to be "proletarian." Instead of repentantly crying "*mea culpa! mea culpa!*" they now flay other sinners with the assurance of a reformed boozefighter confident that his past indiscretions have been forgotten. Among such are the *Partisan Review* editors, Rahv and Phillips.

The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography shows some concern for impartiality, but its authors are guilty of over-simplification when they assert that *The Left* ". . . gave space to the young writers who were underlining in their poems and stories the courage of the worker and the evil of his 'owner.'" This blanket characterization of stories in *The Anvil* is equally lopsided: "The uninformed worker lives in an atmosphere of helplessness which can be relieved only by learning the Marxist truth, or by committing suicide." Open to question, certainly, is the praise of *Partisan Review* as "the best of all left-wing literary magazines" and the contention that it "demonstrates *pari passu* the contradictions real and imagined of the revolutionary writers of the thirties." It actually represents, of course, the "contradictions" of the small, hyper-intellectual Trotzkyite group connected with the magazine. The morbid preoccupation of the *Partisan Review* with the defeatist Existentialist movement in France illuminates its prevailing attitude.

One could wish that the authors of *The Little Magazine* had found the struggles of Ben Hagglund, proletarian publisher who often had to bind his dilapidated press with haywire and to lug it around with him when he was compelled to change jobs, as interesting and as worthy of mention as the vicissitudes of Margaret Ander-

son and Jane Heap when they lived in a tent beside Lake Michigan and contributors came by to pin poems for *The Little Review* onto their canvas abode. The story of Marvin Sanford, who coaxed an old printing plant down in the Cajun country of Louisiana into pouring forth a galaxy of proletarian magazines, is essentially as dramatic as that of the *Broom* expatriates and the Munson-Josephson battle in the old Connecticut mud, related at length here. There is a careful and fairly complete cataloguing of the little magazines, but a great many representative contributors have been missed altogether. Examples are Don West, Harold Preece and Edwin Rolfe. Nevertheless, the authors deserve much credit, and their sins of commission and omission are not grave.

We may see a new group of American expatriates taking off for Paris to join in the hijinks of the Existentialists. It seems unlikely, however, that the noxious Existentialist nightshade will find firm roots in the subsoil of France, though it may flower pallidly for a time in the Paris cafes. It is even less likely that the callow despairs of our "jazz age" youngsters will be prevalent again to any great extent.

Out in San Francisco the Audience Group has great plans for the cultural renaissance just ahead of us; a similar organization in New York is Contemporary Writers. The appearance of *Mainstream* provides a rallying point for writers not willing to concede defeat in advance. In St. Louis a few earnest youngsters may be talking about buying a mimeograph (you can get out a magazine that way). In Omaha there may be a rusty printing press waiting to be hauled out and put to service in publishing the fresh, vital work of new writers not concerned with a literature of doubt and negation or necrophilic diddling with Gothic metaphysics.

These are the little magazine authors of the immediate future, a period that ought to be as productive as that of the Thirties. Some of the newcomers will never attract the attention of commercial publishers; others will be spoiled by their success and will become contemptuous of and ashamed of the creative urges that started them on their way. In the harsh days before us, with vengeful reactionaries rampant and already half-way back to complete rule, not a few of the faint-hearted will be unable to face reality and will, like Henry Miller, "take to the opium of dream." But the little magazines and the little magazine writers will, as Ma Joad said of the people, "just keep comin' on."

Cliveden's Viscount

COMPLACENT DICTATOR, *by Viscount Templewood. Knopf. $3.50.*

VISCOUNT TEMPLEWOOD is the title handed—as a reward for his services to British imperialism or as an alias to protect him from the wrath of the people—to the infamous Sir Samuel Hoare. Sir Samuel will go down in history, way down, as the author of the Hoare-Laval pact which, delivered Ethiopia to Mussolini's Fascist slavers. When the story of the pact leaked, public indignation forced Hoare out of the British Foreign Minister's post. But it was only the beginning of his career as a Fifth Columnist.

A charter member of the Cliveden clique, he was headmaster in Neville Chamberlain's school of "appeasement." Now, for the benefit of

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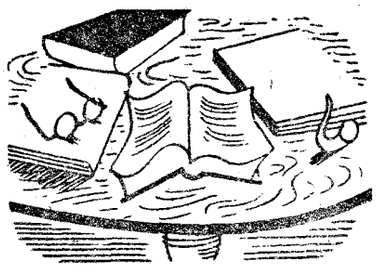

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younger readers, it should be recalled that "appeasement" was not a pacification plan. On the contrary, it was intended to encourage German aggression with the long-range aim of involving Germany and Russia in a war of mutual exhaustion. Britain was then supposed to step in and "dictate the peace."

Spain, like Ethiopia, was deliberately fed to the tiger in accordance with this too-clever calculation. Quite logically, the Lord High Executioner of free Spain became Britain's Ambassador to Franco. If we are to believe Sir Samuel and the dust-jacket, this book is "the exciting and revealing story of his years of struggle to keep the Franco regime from openly joining the Axis." It "complements—and in some details challenges—Carlton J. H. Hayes' report on his years as United States Ambassador," published as *Wartime Mission in Spain*.

Fortunately, we have learned not to believe Sir Samuel. His wartime mission, like that of Hayes, had conflicting objectives. And those objectives must be judged from the present behavior of the British and American governments. On the one hand (and in this the book reflects their views), they speak contemptuously of Franco. On the other hand, they stand in the way of his removal unless they, without the participation of the Spanish people, can hand-pick a successor. The British rulers want a nice king, or a general, to keep "order" in Spain while Britain holds the real power. The American finaglers want a man obedient to them.

Hoare says: "As an English monarchist I would myself naturally wish to see a constitutional monarchy." In his reports, he constantly advised against using sanctions to drive Franco out because it might offer the Spanish people an opportunity to settle with their Nazi-imposed tormentors. "I fear," he wrote in December, 1943, "that if the daily life of the country were brought to an abrupt standstill, anarchy of the most dangerous kind would spread like wildfire from one end of Spain to the other." And, horrors! "the upheaval might start with a massacre of the Falange leaders."

That Hoare's view "in some details challenges" the account of Hayes should startle no one. British and American reaction have been unable to agree on a successor to Franco because British and American capital cannot agree on the division of loot —of economic spoils, fat contracts, concessions, exclusive deals — from Spain.

During the late war, the United States penetrated this former exclusive British preserve just as American capital, under cover of the war, displaced British capital on every continent. Hoare, "member of a family that has been prominent in banking since the seventeenth century," was unable to prevent Wall Street from moving in on Madrid. It is not an accident that American, not British, aviation now holds the exclusive contract for airlines *inside* Spain.

There is nothing too harsh to say about Hoare and the appeasers, or about British imperialism in general. But as Americans we cannot indulge in that escape from our own responsibilities. The fact is that Franco today gets his main support from Washington, not London. It's time to turn the "bipartisan" rascals out.

GEORGE MARION.

Rebel or Playboy?

THE WHITE CHARGER, *by Elsa Triolet. Rinehart.* $3.

ELSA TRIOLET, wife of the famous poet, Louis Aragon, has a fighting background. Not only was she a conscientious worker for the Resistance, but she wrote a biography of the Russian poet Mayakovsky which was seized upon and destroyed by the Vichyites during the war. She is also the author of *Les Amants D'Avignon*, published in France in 1943, which has been called "one of the best short novels of the Resistance movement." *The White Charger*, however, written in that year of "desolation" for France, 1942, is a desolate thing itself. Miss Triolet wrote the book, she relates, to get her through the nightmare that she lived. And perhaps that is the novel's only virtue.

The hero, Michel Vigaud, is a Parisian glamor boy. He sleeps with the most beautiful women in Paris—princess and pauper, couturiere and heiress; he dines fastidiously with the most fastidious. When he sings, Paris swoons. This glamor boy never reads the newspapers, never looks at a book, knows nothing about politics—and yet he isn't exactly just a bit of trash of the European continent and rich America. The diplomats, the art collectors, the sophisticated writers and playwrights

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whose parties he attends are out of touch with the people. Michel Vigaud is not. When he sings, he sings the songs all the people love. In America, only the Negroes seem real to him, and indeed, early in his life he leaves his elegant school and becomes an ordinary seaman. Later, again restless among the inconsequential rich, he works in an inn where he scrubs floors and keeps the copper shining. Somehow he always seems to absorb the atmosphere of a city. "It was as though he bore on him the lights of the street, the squeal of tires, the enormous winking of the electric signs. There was the long train of a secret life behind him. Everyone had something of him. . . ."

In other words, Michel Vigaud is not just a gigolo. On the contrary, Michel Vigaud is a dreamer. He dreams that he is riding on a white charger, off to liberate a city, and that beautiful maidens with golden tresses throw roses upon his path. Are his dreams of himself astride a white charger proof of his essential heroism? Elsa Triolet seems to be saying that they are, that despite his cold debauchery, his drug trafficking across the Spanish border, his money marriage to a hard-boiled and unattractive American businesswoman, he has the elements of the fighting rebel within him; and to prove this she allows her hero to die gloriously for France on the battlefield.

Certainly this kind of romantic heroism is false and destructive. Michel Vigaud has all the opportunities to "liberate a city," not only at the time of the Spanish Civil War but while Hitler is savagely marching through Europe and the French industrialists are blithely selling out their country. The author, however, does not point out that he is overlooking these opportunities for "heroism." She does not even suggest that her hero is monstrously ironical when in the face of his nightmare world he laments that there is no cause *big* enough for him to sacrifice his life in. When, therefore, discarded by his beloved because he is not learned enough, he turns to newspapers and books and finally to politics by going to war, it is the act not of a hero but of a disillusioned dilettante. To die for one's country is not enough if one dies for irrelevant reasons. To die for the people of one's country because they are being threatened by fascist invaders, that is the death of a hero. Michel Vigaud's kind of heroism does not make for fighters in peace. Only political consciousness and organized action will secure the kind of world we want.

There is also a lack of proportion in the book. Even if one were to assume that Michel Vigaud is essentially a rebel but that he is only misguided and needs some strong personal force to make him see the light, there is still no reason why more than half the book should be devoted to his lurid adventures. Had the author not been afraid to overwrite on politics as she has fearlessly overwritten on the bedroom, the book still perhaps would have been worthy.

And, finally, if the book is an attempt to create a hero who is the soul of France—with all its yearnings and passions and recklessness—is there need for the slick artifice, the boudoir atmosphere of American *Forever Ambers?*

HARRIET HAMBARIN.

Two Musicians

MOZART, *by Ann Lingg. Holt.* $3.
HAYDN, *by David Ewen. Holt.* $2.75.

ANN LINGG'S *Mozart* is a dangerous assignment carried off remarkably well. The perils it avoids are the frequent ones, in a novelized biography, of interpreting music in terms of mystical soul torments or torrential love affairs. The author is thoroughly steeped in Mozart's music, in his letters, and in the factual knowledge of Viennese life. One feels that this book is the cream of a fine scholarship. The characterizations, not only of Mozart but of his father, wife, and a host of other figures, are completely credible. The transparency of the style makes the book especially fit for young students, but the thinking throughout is on the most mature level. The book is no substitute for studies of Mozart's life and work such as those of Jahn, Blom and Einstein, but anyone interested in Mozart's music and wanting an introduction to the man will find this volume very satisfying.

David Ewen's *Haydn* is not nearly as successful, being obviously written down to its audience, and talking too much, rather than, as Lingg does, making the characters and music tell the story. It is also somewhat slipshod in facts, as in the error of calling the "Oxford" one of the twelve "London" symphonies.

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SHLEMIEL AS FARMER

The facts of pioneer life as cleaned up by MGM. "The Yearling" and three other films.

By JOSEPH FOSTER

SO ALL-PREVAILING have been the toughie, creepy, killer films that when a movie comes along mumbling about economic struggle, even if only in the foreword, the critics embrace it as a great social document. Such has been the fine, fortuitous fate of *The Yearling*. For myself, I hold that it is undeserving of such affection. Were anyone to ask me to name the film that embodied most successfully the characteristics of the Hollywood product, I would unhesitantly pick this same *Yearling*. Not because it is a technicolor triumph, costing enough money to keep NEW MASSES in ready cash for the next dozen years (wages included), but because it makes serious pretenses at approaching life amid all the restraints, delusions, escapisms, distortions and euphemisms that mark our movie excursions into realism. Since I have not read the novel on which the film is based, I do not know where the original author proposes, and where MGM disposes.

The film pursues two themes at once—the relations among mother, father and son, and the tough struggle for existence that the pioneer dirt farmer faced. The two, of course, are interwoven, and the film indicates somewhat how the struggle to survive affects the attitudes of the members of the family to one another. Pursued within a historically accurate context, the subject could provide a film of staggering impact and importance. Needless to say, *The Yearling* is not that film, by several country miles. It presents all the appurtenances of life, all the facets of struggle, except the dirt and the sweat of actual living. The figure is there, but the lungs don't move. With all the technical skill that the studios are able to call upon, the film piles detail upon heart-rending detail, so as to overcome the most obstinate tear-duct; yet the eye remains dry and the heart lingers elsewhere.

Why is this? you ask. Simply because the ferocious battle with environment is not based on obstacles that are natural and unavoidable, but on a series of misfortunes that are arbitrary inventions of the writer. For instance: the father, under other circumstances a conceivably intelligent man, is here so inept that in real life he would have perished within a year or two of his attempt to subdue a portion of the Florida wilderness. As it is, he spends half his film life in bed. He can hardly be considered a representative of the hardy and resourceful pioneer.

Lack of meat is one of the most nagging handicaps that besets the embattled family: the little boy cannot afford to keep a pet, another mouth to feed. Yet in every history I have ever read, game was one of the mainstays of the pioneer. In the film, the woods around their clearing literally jump with wild life—but hunger or no hunger, killing is out of the question. Otherwise the whimsical bambi quality of the picture, with its leaping, gamboling deer, would be ruined.

The boy, played by Claude Jarmon, Jr., provides whatever moving atmosphere the film has. He is as yet an unspoiled youngster, relaxed and candid in his actions. He never does any work around the farm, except in moments of crisis; yet when he rolls up his sleeves he is the equal of his dad and is furthermore able to get out of bed the following morning. That his face glows with a continual cleanliness, that never a smudge mars the studio perfection of his face and hands is consistent with the general approach of the film to honest sweat.

ANOTHER film whose foreword beats its chops with moral earnestness is *Swell Guy*. This film was made by Mark Hellinger, who is currently being motivated by a search for unconventional types. Prior to the unwinding of this opus, he informs us that man is neither good nor bad, but a combination of both. This is a discovery that was put to words and music by Tin Pan Alley pundits years ago, but the modern movie had never put the idea so succinctly for itself before. The film is a letdown. Instead of depicting a man in his virtuous and sinful behavior, *Swell Guy* turns up an unmitigated heel. He leaves women in a family way all over the landscape. He steals money, his brother's wife, credit from his co-workers, and violates every principle of decency. His little nephew worships him and feeds his ego. He is thus fond of the boy, and this fondness, I suppose, is intended to supply the balancing quality of good. With superior acting and directing this film might have still come out better than average, but Sonny Tufts as the punk makes the whole business slightly silly. He bats his eyes at people and smiles continuously as he informs you that he doesn't mean to be bad. He was just made that way.

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Still a third film that employs the preface to explain itself is *Lady in the Lake,* but this time a new technique rather than a social idea is the burden. Robert Montgomery appears as the Greek chorus of one to explain that in this film the audience is both the camera eye and the hero. Thus the actors address the audience directly instead of one another. Montgomery is merely seen as a hand, a grunt, or a speech. As an innovation it is to be commended if for no other reason than that it gives evidence that the boys are trying. However in its practical effects it achieves just the opposite results to those it set out for. It is by now a platitude to say that the movies are more seductive and ingratiating than any other medium of communication. Where people would reject a story in a book or theater, they usually accept it in movie terms. What makes the film such a powerful propaganda medium is the ease with which people identify themselves with movie characters. (Why this is so would require a long study in itself.)

With *Lady in the Lake,* because of its technical gimmick, audiences become self-conscious. They laugh and make wisecracks and remain utterly outside the customary magic that movies exercise. Thus in spite of its deliberate effort to identify characters with audience, the movie produced the diametric effect. Consequently the film, a typical Chandler yarn with its fair share of hardboiled action, murder and suspense, becomes the dullest whodunnit I have sat through in many a day. Maybe next time they'll leave the lily alone.

About the only recent film that doesn't lean upon forewords, footnotes or preliminary curtain speeches to make its meaning clear is *Dead Reckoning,* but this one is so faithful to formula that it is scarcely necessary. *Dead Reckoning* is a customary Bogart thriller, with Lisbeth Scott in place of Baby Bacall as the only noticeable variation from the past. Scott uses almost the same throaty morbidetzza voice as her predecessor. She blows out tobacco smoke with the same studied indifference to danger and drawls the deadly words of love and murder with the same insouciance. If you gather that she is the type to the very eyebrows, you are right. However I believe that Bacall has better over-all gear.

Morris Carnovsky, as fine an actor as has ever come to Hollywood, is misused in this film more blatantly than usual. He has been cast in all types of roles from the fine Anatole France of *Zola* to his current shady night club operator, crook and killer. The part fits him like a bullet fits a human organ. It may rest comfortably but it doesn't do the organ any good.

THEATER

THE historical repertory which Erwin Piscator's Dramatic Workshop performs in illustration of its "March of Drama" course has just completed its winter and begun its spring season. This repertory has two distinctions which set it apart from others. Drawn from the major dramatic literatures and periods of the world it fulfills its educational purpose without, however, straining dramatic interest for the sake of the education. And it proposes to show, and generally succeeds in showing, drama as a reflection of the life of its time.

The "March of Drama" performances, done by student players, cannot of course compare with such finished acting as the American Repertory Theater provides; and the company assembled from the winter class did not seem to me up to that of the previous seasons. But the staging was as inventive as before and showed how will and resourcefulness can overcome the handicaps of a tiny stage and meager properties.

The spring season, just begun, again includes great plays not seen here for years and not likely to be seen on the commercial stage for further years. Among them are Gogol's great satire, *The Inspector General,* Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock,* Pirandello's *Tonight We Improvise,* Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid,* Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night,* Lope de Vega's *The Sheep Well* and Ibsen's *Peer Gynt.* A number of these are carryovers from previous seasons. It is therefore regrettable that Pogodin's *The Aristocrats,* the Soviet play which was one of the Workshop's outstanding productions last year, is missing from this season's repertory. At this time it would have been a substantial service to culture, and several other important causes as well, for the Workshop to have contin-

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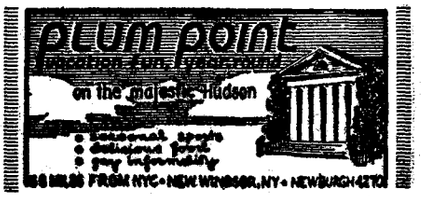

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SINCE the recording companies generally follow in the tracks of the concert halls, the greatest part of recorded serious music comes from the nineteenth century, the "concert hall" century. Yet it is in recording music of our own time, and music of earlier centuries than the nineteenth, that the phonograph rises to full stature as an art medium in its own right. A great mass of this earlier music was written for "amateur" performance rather than for a virtuoso display before a mass audience. The phonograph restores this amateur quality, both in the intimacy of the sound itself and in the fact that any layman can acquire a familiarity with every nuance of this music, previously possible only to specialist performers. For this reason the appearance of three albums of eighteenth century music, great music excellently performed, is gratifying.

The three Mozart violin sonatas that Alexander Schneider and Ralph Kirkpatrick record are all inspired and all different. The C Major, K 296, is in Mozart's popular "serenade" style; the B Flat, K 378, is in a more tight and subtle texture; the G Major, K 379, has a touch of the grand manner of the piano concertos. The use of the harpsichord instead of the customary piano gives the music clarity, a fine chamber music balance, and the intimacy I have spoken of, reminding one that it was for amateur performance rather than for concert hall dynamics that Mozart wrote them (Columbia M 650). The Budapest Quartet turns in an expert performance of Haydn's melodious Quartet in G Minor, Op. 745, No. 3, called the "Horseman" because of its syncopated finale (Columbia MX 274).

Marion Anderson sings five "Bach Arias" with a beauty of tone, impeccable control and ease of phrasing unmatched by any other singer. Included are four fine cantata arias and the great *Erbarme Dich* from the St. Matthew Passion. A noteworthy feature of this recording, in contrast to some previous botched jobs, is the retention of Bach's original instrumental settings, under Robert Shaw's expert direction. There are not

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merely vocal works, but each aria is as complex a contrapuntal and instrumental conception as any Bach sonata or concerto movement (Victor M 1087). It is interesting to compare these records to Stokowski's transcriptions of Purcell's "Trumpet Prelude" and a Haydn Quartet movement (Victor 11-9419). Stokowski does a good job for those who must have the inflated nineteenth century orchestral sound, but the Bach records reveal that the earlier masters had instrumental conceptions of their own, and on a far higher level.

Bruno Walter's special qualities are a self-effacing love for the music and a feeling for how it ought to sound. When these are combined with the sumptuous tone of the Philadelphia Orchestra and good recording, as in a new album of the Beethoven Sixth Symphony, the result is as satisfying a "Pastoral" as I ever expect to hear (Columbia M 631). Stokowski offers a well-recorded "Forest Murmurs" from Wagner's "Siegfried" with the Hollywood Bowl Symphony (Victor 11-9418), and Robert Merrill sings baritone arias from "Andrea Chenier" and "Africana" with rich voice and sensitive shading (Victor 11-9384).

Our own times are represented on records by a new "augmentation" done by Stravinsky himself of the "Fire-Bird" Suite, and performed with the New York Philharmonic. The additions to the familiar score give it a new, neo-classic character, like a set of fairy-tale decorations suddenly made into a baroque monument. Stravinsky's conducting is especially exciting for its rhythmic nuances, so that the silences become almost as expressive as the sounds themselves (Columbia M 653). Artur Rubinstein performs three of the brilliant but empty Milhaud "Saudades do Brazil," and a less pianistic but much more moving "Prelude No. 2" by Gershwin (Victor 11-9240).

A folk singer new to records, Susan Reed, presents a varied program of "Folk Songs and Ballads" with a voice of real quality, a clear diction, and a subtle dramatization that seems to me always in good taste (Victor M 1006). Another fine album of folk songs, especially chosen for children, is "Songs to Grow On," in which the singing is done by Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, Charity Bailey and Cisco Housten, all of them masters of folk style (Disc 604).

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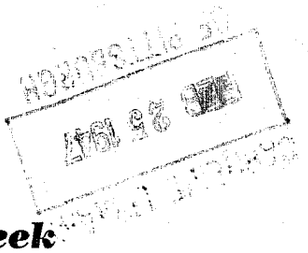

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